

29 Yet I Will Rejoice – Finding a Foundation in the Dry Season

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I struggled with this one longer than usual this week.

Not because I didn't know what to say.

Because I wasn't sure where to start.

Some weeks aren't bad. They're just flat.

Not a crisis. Not a low point. Just... **meh.**

If that's where you are right now, this one is for you.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever brought you into this season.

Maybe the drought you're in was caused by nothing you did. A diagnosis. A layoff. A loss you never saw coming. Life simply happened to you, the way weather happens – it's not a choice you make, but something you have to live through.

Maybe it wasn't external at all. Maybe you can trace the drought straight back to a decision you made, a door you walked through, a pattern you indulged longer than you should have.

Either way, you're standing on dry ground right now. And I want to talk about how to stand there.

This past couple of months has been a season of drought for our family in more than one sense. The weight has lightened some since then. But I know many of you are still standing exactly where we were – or somewhere harder.

So this article isn't really about my season anymore.

It's about yours.

The Drought Is Not Optional

We live in a fallen world.

That is not pessimism. It is simply true.

Some seasons bring plenty. Rain when you need it, provision when you ask for it, ease you didn't earn and don't take for granted.

But more often than not, there is drought.

Spiritual drought, where prayer feels like talking into an empty room.

Physical drought, where your body doesn't cooperate no matter what you do.

Mental and emotional drought, where the fog doesn't lift no matter how much you want it to.

Relational drought, financial drought, vocational drought – seasons where everything you're depending on seems to be withering at once.

Scripture never promises us an exemption from this.

What it promises is something better: a way to stand through it.

But we don't often see it that way, do we.

We expect deliverance.

And when deliverance doesn't come, we go looking for a reason why.

Maybe there's unrepentant sin.

Maybe our faith isn't strong enough.

Maybe we're simply unworthy – our sin was too great, and now we must pay for it.

We would rather believe we deserve the drought than believe God might have a purpose we cannot yet see.

Habakkuk's Impossible Declaration

The prophet Habakkuk lived through the kind of season that makes ours look mild.

He watched injustice spread unchecked in his own nation. He cried out to God, asking why evil seemed to prosper while the righteous suffered. And God's answer was not comfort.

It was worse news.

God told him that judgment was coming – through the Babylonians, a nation more violent than the one already troubling him. Everything Habakkuk knew was about to be stripped away.

And yet, at the very end of this short, difficult book, Habakkuk writes one of the most extraordinary declarations in all of Scripture:

“Though the fig tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit on the vines; though the yield of the olive fails, and the fields produce no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no cattle in the stalls; yet I will exult in Yahweh. I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. Yahweh, the Lord, is my strength; He has made my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk on my high places.” (Habakkuk 3:17-19, LSB)

Read that list again.

No fig tree. No grapes. No olives. No grain. No livestock.

Every single source of provision and security... gone.

This is not a man with something left to lean on. This is total, comprehensive loss.

And still – yet I will rejoice.

Not because the circumstances changed.

They hadn't.

Because his strength was never actually coming from the fig tree in the first place.

The Foundation, Not the Walls

In the castle I write about, we spend a lot of time discussing walls, rooms, towers, drawbridges.

But none of that matters if the foundation underneath is cracked.

The foundation is not what protects you from the storm. It's what keeps you standing after the storm has already come through.

Habakkuk's foundation was not his crops or his flocks. Those were walls – useful, real, but never meant to hold the weight of his security.

When the walls came down, the foundation held.

That is the entire point of a foundation. It's tested only when everything visible has already failed.

Paul's Secret – and the Word Behind It

Centuries later, a man sitting in a Roman prison wrote something remarkably similar.

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:11-13, LSB)

That word “content” is worth a deeper look.

In the original Greek, it's *autarkēs*.

Here's what's fascinating about that word: it wasn't Paul's invention. It was already a well-known term in Greek philosophy – specifically among the Stoics, who considered self-sufficiency the highest virtue a person could achieve.

Autarkēs meant literally “self” plus “sufficient.” A person who needed nothing. Who depended on no one. Who could remain calm no matter what circumstances threw at them, because they had trained their will to need nothing external at all.

Paul takes that word – and completely subverts it.

He is not claiming Stoic detachment. He is not saying he has trained himself into needing nothing.

He is saying his sufficiency comes from Christ.

Notice verse 13 does not say “I can do all things,” period. It says **“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”**

Remove the source, and the sentence collapses.

Paul was never self-sufficient. He was Christ-sufficient. And that distinction makes all the difference.

The Stoics tried to build contentment by hardening themselves against need. Paul built his by pointing every need directly at God.

That’s the same foundation Habakkuk was standing on centuries before Paul ever wrote a word.

Whatever Brought You Here

I want to speak directly to two different readers right now, because I suspect you’re both here.

If your drought is not your fault – if this is simply what living in a fallen world produces, sickness, loss, circumstances entirely outside your control – please hear this: Habakkuk’s fig tree didn’t fail because of anything he did. Judgment was coming on a nation, not a punishment on him personally. And still he found a foundation solid enough to stand on.

You are not required to understand why this happened to earn the right to stand on that same foundation.

If your drought traces back to your own choices – a decision, a pattern, a door you shouldn’t have walked through – please also hear this: Paul wrote his letter on contentment from a prison cell, and prison was not an accident of fate for him. It was the direct result of the very ministry he was called to. He does not spend Philippians 4 wallowing in how he got there. **He points to the God who is sufficient regardless of the road that led him to his current circumstance.**

Neither of you is disqualified from this foundation.

Neither of you built your way out of reach of it.

Persevering Doesn’t Mean Pretending

I want to be careful here. There’s a strain of western Christianity that has quietly traded genuine faith for a kind of baptized positive thinking – verses lifted out of context and used like affirmations. Smile through it, speak only positive words, and the hard thing will simply pass. That is not what Habakkuk or Paul are doing here, and it is not what I’m doing either.

Habakkuk didn't skip past his grief to get to verse 19. Earlier in that same chapter he describes his body trembling, his lips quivering, rottenness entering his bones at the thought of what was coming. (Habakkuk 3:16)

He felt every bit of the drought before he declared his foundation.

Paul wrote his letter on contentment from an actual prison, not a metaphorical one.

Neither man skipped the hard part. They walked directly through it, and testified to what held them while they did.

That is what persevering actually looks like.

Not denial.

Not pretending the fig tree bloomed when it didn't.

Simply this: the fig tree failed, and I am still standing, because I was never relying on the fig tree to begin with.

What This Means for You Today

If you are in a drought right now – for reasons you understand or reasons you don't – I want to leave you with this.

The walls of your life may be failing.

The provision you expected may not have come.

The season may be far harder and far longer than you hoped it would be.

But check what you're actually standing on.

If it's the crop, the job, the relationship, the health, the outcome you were praying for – of course it's shaking. Those things were never built to hold the full weight of your security.

But if the foundation underneath all of it is Christ – you will still be standing long after the metaphorical fig tree has failed.

Not because you're strong.

Because He is sufficient.

And that was true for Habakkuk. It was true for Paul in prison. And it is still true, in your drought, today.

If you're struggling:

- Christian Faith-Based Resources: <https://mentalhealthhotline.org/christian-faith-resources/> or call 1-866-903-3787 (24/7)

- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call or text)

You matter. Whatever drought you are walking through right now, however it began – you are not standing alone. Please stay.

William James Meyer is the author of “Do You Live in a Castle? Breaking Free from the Walls That Hold You Hostage.” He writes from a Christian perspective as a fellow traveler – someone who has walked through his own dry seasons, and who is learning, slowly, to stand on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

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