

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of September 2 & 3, 2017

Dear Members of St. John

Last weekend, Saturday (August 26th) I was able to take part in the marriage of my niece, Becki Herbolsheimer (I had performed the wedding of her older sister two years ago). This time because of where I am with my cancer treatment, I was only able to give the closing benediction and announcement of husband and wife. I would have been too stressed out to do the entire wedding service.

So, that brings me to ask: ***“O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save?”*** (Habakkuk 1:2). Do these questions sound familiar? Do you feel abandoned in your suffering? Have you cried out for relief from your struggles with your work, relationships, parenting or cancer? Maybe you’re weary from waiting for the Lord to intervene. You see suffering in this world and in your life and say with Habakkuk, “How long will you keep ignoring my struggle, Lord?”

In response to these questions, God reminds Habakkuk of two important truths: The Lord still reigns on the throne, and He is at work in ways we can’t comprehend. God tells him, ***“I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told”*** (Habakkuk 1:5b). This truth calms Habakkuk’s questioning heart. He stops wrestling with his unchanged circumstances and starts resting in God’s unchanging character. He trusts his uncertain future to his reigning Heavenly Father.

Although Habakkuk realizes life won’t be easy, but harder, he offers a beautiful declaration of trust: ***“Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation”*** (Habakkuk 3:18). Habakkuk rejoiced in his suffering because of the salvation promised by the Lord. Good for Habakkuk, you might be thinking, but how can I rejoice in my struggles? I can’t seem to muster any joy in my circumstances.

We find our answer in Habakkuk 3:19: ***“GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places.”*** When we are weakened by suffering, God’s strength empowers us to rejoice. Romans 5:5b tells us we can rejoice in our suffering ***“because God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”*** The Holy Spirit fills us with confidence in God’s love. This steadfast love is demonstrated to us by the sacrifice of His Son on that terrible cross for our salvation. Our Spirit-given confidence overflows into faith through unending troubles, enabling us to praise God even in our struggles.

The Lord reigns. He has not forgotten us. He is at work in all of our struggles. And by His strength, we will rejoice in the midst of changing circumstances of life.

With great love for you all.

Pastor Jim