**Thursday 7th May**

 Habakkuk 3: 17 – 19

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,
**18**yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
    I will be joyful in God my Saviour.

**19**The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
    he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
    he enables me to tread on the heights.

Yesterday we looked at Psalm 103 and thought of all the benefits and blessings of knowing Jesus! And there are many! But today’s passage contrasts in many ways. There are times in our lives when we find it difficult to see the blessings – times when life feels hard, and it is a struggle to see God’s hand at work and when our prayers seem ineffective. The truth that Habakkuk relates gives us encouragement in those times. He paints a picture of a time of hardship, where the crops fail and the herds are unproductive. Of course, this would have meant famine in an age where there was no local supermarket to access food. The people of God had a strong link to the land and relied on God for it’s  fruitfulness. Habakkuk says an amazing thing: ‘Even if all these benefits of being God’s people fail, still I will praise you Lord’. Praise in a time of pain is profoundly powerful. In our praises, we declare that we believe in the goodness and faithfulness of God as a foundational truth, unaffected by our situation. It doesn’t deny the difficulties, but chooses to exalt a greater reality above them. And as Habakkuk chooses praise and joy in the midst of hardship he discovers another truth: that the Lord is His strength – that just in knowing God we are strengthened and revived for every scenario. When we worship despite the mystery of difficult times, he draws us higher and enables our perspective to change.

*Lord we choose to worship you today – to ‘raise a Hallelujah, in the middle of the mystery’. We praise you for your goodness, your faithfulness, your sovereignty, your unchanging nature. We praise you because you are God and you are worthy of all honour and praise! We ask that today we would know you as our strength, our provision,*

*our all-sufficiency, and that you would give us sure-footing as we run with you. In Jesus name. Amen*

[*https://youtu.be/e3RRU25dpPg*](https://youtu.be/e3RRU25dpPg)

