



## Preaching Resources | Thanksgiving 2020

**Scripture Passage:** Habakkuk 3:17-19

**Focus Statement:** Even in 2020, give thanks in the Lord always.

### ME:

Share how you may have struggled or are struggling to give thanks this year. (For example, sadness about not being able to be with family, feeling like the bad outweighs the good, grief over what the year has brought). Thanksgiving in COVID looks sadly different.

### WE:

It's been an incredibly hard year, between the pandemic (beginning in March), murdering hornets (April), protests for justice (summer), wildfires (August), Ruth Bader Ginsberg's death (September), the president being sick with COVID-19 (October), the election (November). Now it's Thanksgiving. We are supposed to give thanks, but next week it's December, the year is practically over, and it might be hard to find something to be thankful for. Discuss the struggles experienced by those in your congregation.

### GOD:

Habakkuk speaks to the community interpreting the oracles from the Temple. Within 20 years, Israel will fall to the Babylonians. Habakkuk speaks into a world of injustice and violence, foreign invasions that have decimated parts of the country, economic upheaval and instability. The poor are suffering and the arrogant are in control. God has been very clear with Habakkuk that the nation will fall and there will be even more pain and suffering ahead. Habakkuk's world doesn't sound too much different from life in 2020. What is there to be thankful for?

Habakkuk 3 is more of a psalm of the Lord, though clearly in the voice of Habakkuk. Like many of the psalms, verses 2-15 are a reminder of all that God has done for Israel through the exodus, wilderness and in the Promised Land.

Even as he names all of the distress in verse 17, Habakkuk turns to giving thanks. His joy does not come from his present human circumstances, but his faith in God and the salvation that God provides.



## YOU:

Despite the chaos around him and the certainty of destruction ahead, Habakkuk never denies or questions God's existence. Instead, he lays out his pain and names the suffering. Where are you suffering? (Spend time in prayer.)

As in so many of the Hebrew scriptures, the writer turns to remembering the exodus to find hope. Reiterate the importance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection to give us not a fleeting moment of hope but hope in eternal life. When in your life has God given you hope and life?

Habakkuk names what brings him joy – God's salvation. We give thanks for Jesus Christ and have so much to be thankful for, even in 2020. What are you thankful for?



**WE:** Like Habakkuk, we live in a place where much of the world is experiencing despair instead of hope and lives in fear instead of thanksgiving. What is one thing you could do this week to help others give thanks?