

Habakkuk

Habakkuk, though a relatively obscure book of the Bible, is very applicable for us today. We will see in this first portion of the book that Habakkuk repeatedly asks the question why.

1. Lord, “Why” is their such evil in the world, in my nation, in my community?
2. Lord, “Why” do the wicked prosper?
3. Lord, “Why” would you use the wicked and seemingly overlook their sin?
4. Lord, “Why” do you seem so distant to your own people?

Do you ever find yourself asking God why? The primary answer for Habakkuk comes to him in chapter 2, verse 20, which is where we get the title for this series. Habakkuk 2:20

1. The Hebrew “be silent” could literally be translated, “hush.”
2. When we realize the infinite wisdom and wonder of God, a hush should fill the room.
3. Let us be still before Him now and ask Him to help us as we get into this book.

PRAY

We will see several applications from this chapter as we hear Habakkuk’s complaint to the Lord, the Lord’s counsel to Habakkuk, and Habakkuk’s response to what God shows him.

I. Habakkuk’s Complaint

Verse 1

1. The word oracle...is literally burden. This is a burden that he was seeing.
2. What was he seeing? Verse 3!

Verse 2

1. Habakkuk has been calling for help and it seemed as though God wasn’t hearing.
2. He also cried to God violence (Hebrew word means to scream) and yet, God will not save.
3. He is earnestly praying and God is refusing to hear and refusing to help. He is all alone!

Verse 3-4

1. Habakkuk’s day is a day characterized by
 - a. Violence and Destruction
 - b. Iniquity and wrong
 - c. Strife and Contention
 - d. Ignored Scriptures and a lack of justice
 - e. The wicked seem to triumph and the righteous seem to retreat and God seems to be absent.
2. Have you ever felt this way in your life? In your family? In your community, nation, or world?
 - a. **It is ok to be burdened by what we see and take our burdens to our God.**
 - b. He invites, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”

II. The Lord's Counsel v5-11

Verse 5

Change where you are looking and you will change what you see.

1. Change where you are looking from verse 1 and verse 3 and you will change what you see.
2. God answered His servant and assured him that He was at work among the nations even though Habakkuk couldn't see it and wouldn't believe it if he were told!
3. This is good advice for us when we are tempted to ask why and believe God is absent.
 - a. We need to change where we are looking if we want to change what we see
 - b. 2 Peter 3:13 *We are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells*

God is active even when He seems absent.

Verse 6-11a

If you think the current situation is bad Habakkuk, wait until you hear and understand my solution.

1. If you think God's inactivity was confusing, listen to His activity.
2. He is going to raise up the Chaldeans.
3. God would raise up an utterly pagan, godless people to come in and administer God's judgment on Israel...and not just any people, but the Babylonians who were most despised.
4. It may not be good news, but it is news that God is up to something. He is active!

God's ways are higher than our ways.

1. God is going to use the Chaldeans to discipline His people...and then judge the Chaldeans that He uses for how they treat His people! Verse 11b
2. This may be confusing to us, but God's ways are higher than our ways.
3. Isaiah 55:8-9 "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*" declares the LORD. 9 "*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*
 - a. There is a divine control over history. Things don't happen by accident.
 - b. They are a part of God's plan and His plan is higher than our plan...so hush

III. Habakkuk's Response

Habakkuk questions the Lord only to be informed by the Lord that He is very present and very active... but not in the way that Habakkuk wanted or even could fully understand.

1. This sends Habakkuk into a tail spin.
 - a. This doesn't make sense! This doesn't seem right!
 - b. This doesn't seem like the God I thought I knew at all.
2. What is His response to this internal spiritual conflict. Verse 12

1. Habakkuk professes what he believes to be true.

- a. God is eternal

Happiness cannot perish as long as God lives; he is the first and the last; the first of all delights, nothing before him; the last of all pleasures, nothing beyond him; a paradise of delights in every point...The enjoyment of God will be as fresh and glorious after many ages, as it was at first...fulness of joy will be always present; without past to be thought of with regret for being gone; without future to be expected with tormenting desires. When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his eternity without any flux. Stephen Charnock

- b. God is personal

- c. God is holy

- 1. I know that you are a holy God and I know You hate sin and that You can't do evil.
- 2. You cannot do anything wrong, so it has to be right. verse 13a

- d. God is Faithful

- 1. We shall not die.
- 2. God made a promise with Habakkuk's people that He would make of them a great nation and that Messiah would come through them.
- 3. Habakkuk remembers God's covenant and says, we're not going to die, my God is a faithful God.

2. Habakkuk confesses what he sees to be evident Verses 13-17

- a. Habakkuk confesses his disbelief and struggle with who God is and what he sees.
- b. Habakkuk pours out his distress and doubts before God....this doesn't make sense!
- c. Isn't that comforting that even a prophet can sometimes struggle with God? If he does, surely we can expect to struggle as well.

3. Habakkuk possesses doubts but not disbelief Verses 2:1

- a. There is a difference in doubting and disbelieving
- b. Doubting is knowing the truth, but struggling to fully believe it due to circumstances and conditions.
- c. Disbelief is denying and ultimately rejecting the truth altogether.
- d. Habakkuk is not denying and rejecting God. He is waiting on God to help him overcome his doubts.
- e. He is struggling to wrap his mind around this new concept of God...and that is ok.

It is ok NOT to know or even understand everything.

Infants of a day old are not able to understand the acts of wise and gray heads...the counsels of a boundless being are not to be scanned by the brain of a silly worm, that hath breathed but a few minutes in the world. Charnock

- a. His ways are higher than our ways, and no matter how smart you are, you will never get to the bottom of God.
- b. Not only will you never plumb the depths of God
- c. You will never plumb the depths of even one of His attributes

Conclusion:

Some of you have 100 questions for God. Why's and where are you's.

1. God is present and active...though He may not be doing what we would prefer Him to do.
2. His ways are higher than our ways.
3. Sometimes his perceived inactivity...or his works that make no sense to us, can send us into a spiritual spiral.

What do we do when we find ourselves in this internal struggle?

1. Profess what you believe and know to be true based on God's Word.
2. Confess what you see around you that seems to conflict with what you know of God and His Word.
3. Fight disbelief, by living according to faith.
4. Determine what will be reality
 - a. What God's Word says
 - b. Or what Your circumstances say.
 - c. What God's Word says...or what Your "heart" says or your "feelings" say.
 - d. will you live by faith in what you believe or in fear of
5. Habakkuk 2:4b

THE GOSPEL..the just shall live by faith!

Discussion Questions:

1. What did you learn about God in this sermon and in the biblical texts used? About Christ? About the Holy Spirit?
2. What did you learn about yourself in this sermon and in the texts used?
3. Were there any clear promises or commands in the biblical texts used?
4. What is the hardest truth that stands out to you from this message or the verses referenced?
5. What is the most impactful point or statement from the sermon?
6. How can you respond to this message?