

Sermon Series: The Minor Prophets
Sermon title: Book of Habakkuk
Scripture reading: Habakkuk 3:17-19
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
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Has you ever had a time in your life where you questioned whether God was good?

Or has there ever been a time when God just didn't seemed to be making sense?

Where things just didn't seem to work out the way you planned?

Well, we come today to a beautiful book in the Minor Prophets called Habakkuk. If you've not ever read this book on your own, you should.

Because the book of Habakkuk is a conversation that the prophet Habakkuk has with God. There is some great insight for you today if you are at a place in your life where your faith is being tested or you are at a place where you are doubting God's goodness and wisdom.

Let's pray together.

We don't know much about the man Habakkuk.

We do know his name comes from the Hebrew word for 'embrace'. And ironically we will see that he is a man who 'embraces' God in the midst of testing.

There is very little in the book of Habakkuk about the sins that Israel or Judah are committing.

Nothing about him speaking out against them.

It's more or less a conversation with God.

We do know the time period. He's writing the book before the Babylonians invaded Judah and the city of Jerusalem. So, it's about 604 B.C.

Habakkuk, the man...is an example to us about how to trust God when he doesn't seem good or doesn't make sense.

Let's begin by looking at the first complaint of Habakkuk before the LORD. Let's read chapter 1:1-4

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

2 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous;

so justice goes forth perverted.

We see Habakkuk crying out to the LORD because of the sin of his people in the tribe of Judah. We know it's Judah because the Babylonians conquered Judah in the south and Habakkuk's ministry was there.

So, he cries out,

"Don't you hear God?"

"You don't seem to be doing anything!"

"There is iniquity going on. Aren't you seeing this?"

"There is destruction, violence, strife and contention."

"The law is neglected and injustice reigns."

Habakkuk sees all of these things and he has been asking God to do something about it but there's no answer.

Maybe you feel like that today.

You've been praying and there isn't an answer.

Well, God does answer Habakkuk.

Look at verse 5.

**5 "Look among the nations, and see;
wonder and be astounded.**

**For I am doing a work in your days
that you would not believe if told.**

.....6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,

Habakkuk must have been really happy when God started speaking.

“I am getting ready to do something...something wonderful...astounding...you won’t believe it.”

Now when we talk like that,...it’s usually good.

But, then God says something quite odd and unexpected.

“Behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans.”

And he describes how powerful and vicious they are in verses 6-11.

Habakkuk:

“Um...what did you just say God? I think I misunderstood you. I though I heard you say that you are going to send the Babylonians to punish Judah for her sins.”

God: *“Yep, that’s what I said.”*

You ever had God answer you that way? Ever been looking for an answer but it wasn’t the answer you were expecting or wanting?

Look starting in verse 12..

**Are you not from everlasting,
O Lord my God, my Holy One?**

We shall not die.

O Lord, you have ordained them as a judgment,

and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof.
13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil
and cannot look at wrong,
why do you idly look at traitors
and remain silent when the wicked swallows up
the man more righteous than he?
14 You make mankind like the fish of the sea,
like crawling things that have no ruler.

Habakkuk: *“God I know that you are from everlasting and I know you’re holy. You can’t even look at evil you are so pure. Um...LORD...I know that you’ve ordained them as a judgment and to reprove us...but they are worse than we are! The Babylonians treat people like fish or bugs. They are merciless. I will just wait to see what you have to say. I am sure you understand my point.”*

**I will take my stand at my watch-post
and station myself on the tower,
and look out to see what he will say to me,
and what I will answer concerning my complaint.**

You see, God doesn’t make sense to Habakkuk and not only does he not make sense, but he doesn’t seem good.

Habakkuk waits for an answer.
Maybe you are waiting for an answer from God.
And the answer doesn’t come.

You want God to explain to you why he does what he does and he hasn't.

What are you going to do?

Well, what does he say to Habakkuk?

Chapter 2 verse 4.

'The righteous shall live by his faith.'

He replies, "Trust me.

Rely on me.

My ways are higher than your ways.

My thoughts are higher than your thoughts.

Live by faith!"

Isaiah 40:28-31

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

**The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.**

**He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.**

**29 He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases strength.**

**30 Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;**

**31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their
strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.**

2 Chronicles 16:9

9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

“God, I don’t understand what you’re doing.”

“God, I don’t see how you’re good in this.”

And God says, **“the righteous shall live by faith.”**

Now, in Habakkuk 3 starting in verse 6, God shows Habakkuk that Babylon won’t get away unpunished for their deeds.

God may use them to discipline Judah, but that doesn’t mean that he has forgotten Judah and it doesn’t mean that Babylon is getting off the hook.

So, in verses 6-20 he gives 5 WOES.

Now, Woes are bad....really bad.

So 5 woes here means that this is not good for Babylon.

1. Woe regarding money and how they steal things.
2. Woe regarding money again but this time it is a little more to do with cheating others to get rich.
3. Woe regarding slave labor.
4. Woe regarding drunkenness.
5. Woe regarding idolatry.

In a sense, God is saying, “Habakkuk, you don’t understand what I am doing. It doesn’t make sense to you

I know, but trust me. Your responsibility is to live by faith. And I will take care of Babylon in the end.”

Lastly, we see Habakkuk’s prayer in chapter 3. What we will see is that Habakkuk is a great example of how to live by faith when God doesn’t make sense or seem good.

He begins by saying to God, “*What I have heard you do in the days of old, do it again Lord. If you must show wrath, remember mercy.*”

**O Lord, I have heard the report of you,
and your work, O Lord, do I fear.
In the midst of the years revive it;
in the midst of the years make it known;
in wrath remember mercy.**

And then he gives a history lesson on how great God has been in verses 3-15.

Then we come to the end in verse 16 and Habakkuk tells us and show us what living by faith looks like; a faith that thrives even when you don’t understand God.

**16 I hear, and my body trembles;
my lips quiver at the sound;
rottenness enters into my bones;
my legs tremble beneath me.
Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble**

to come upon people who invade us.
17 Though the fig tree should not blossom,
nor fruit be on the vines,
the produce of the olive fail
and the fields yield no food,
the flock be cut off from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,
18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord;
I will take joy in the God of my salvation.
19 God, the Lord, is my strength;
he makes my feet like the deer's;
he makes me tread on my high places.

I want you to notice some specifics about how we can trust God, how Habakkuk has faith even in tough circumstances.

1. Habakkuk has faith even when his feelings tell him otherwise. (How things are on the inside)

His body trembles.

His lips quiver.

He feels rottenness inside.

His legs shake.

YET....he says he will 'wait quietly' for God to do his thing.

You may be feeling like that today. The stress of trusting is something you can feel physically on the inside.

and secondly.....

2. Habakkuk has faith even when everything around him has fallen apart. (How things are on the outside)

In the times in which Habakkuk lived in an agrarian society, the description he gives of the land in these verses, means that life is basically over.

No fruit.

No olive oil.

No grain.

No meat.

YET....he says he will '**Rejoice**' in the LORD.

He will '**take joy**' and '**find strength**' in God.

Then he says that God will cause his feet to be on solid ground even if it seems that it's dangerous, slippery, things are crumbling around him or if he's afraid.

Like saying, "Even if I am on the edge of the cliff, I will trust in the LORD."

Have you been having any conversations with the Lord about some tough things?

You feel like he isn't good in some way?

God doing something right now you don't understand?

Live by faith.

Trust God though you don't know and can't see.

Quietly wait for him.

[Read 3:17-18]

So, if I am supposed to 'live by faith' even when things don't make sense or even when God doesn't seem good, **what is faith?**

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Why can we as Christians have any hope in times of difficulty, in times of confusion, in times where it seems God isn't good?

Because we can hold onto the promises of God in Jesus Christ.

No matter how bad it may be today or tomorrow, those who belong to Jesus Christ have reason to hope and reason to rejoice..

WHY?

1 Peter 1:3-10 is the answer.

40 million years from now with Christ...it'll be worth it and all the difficulty and sorrows and pain will be a fading memory.