

Habakkuk - Trusting God in Troubled Times

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[0:00] We're going to go to Habakkuk, which is on page 1230 in my Bible. Habakkuk, it's in one of those last few books of your Old Testament in the Minor Prophets there.

And Habakkuk, we're just going to take a little journey through this unique book. It's got some unique features in that it's entirely a dialogue between the prophet and God.

So that's unique here. And the name Habakkuk, it means one who embraces or hugs, clings, one who wrestles. And Habakkuk was known for arguing directly with God.

He had this bold honesty in prayer. So we're going to look at some of that. The prophet wrestled with questions about faith and life. Some call Habakkuk the doubting Thomas of the Old Testament. But really, though, we would better call him the prophet of faith. The book Habakkuk shows a progression from his confusion through ultimately to peace.

[0:57] He goes through different stages, starting with confusion and doubt to faith and trust in God, even though circumstances seem bleak. So he goes from doubts to shouts.

He goes from wondering and worrying to worshipping. He starts by asking, what is God doing to declaring God is? And the book opens in gloom and it closes in glory.

So this book, it was written around 600 BC, before the rise of the Babylonian Empire, this fierce and fearsome nation. It was after the reign of King Josiah.

Josiah was the last good king. And then there was this period of moral decline the nation went through for about 25 years. There was corruption and violence, lawlessness.

The nation of Judah was overtaken by idolatry and moral corruption. So there's lessons from this book that yet, as an old book, we can apply in the modern times we live.

[2:03] This ancient book has got truths that we can apply in our life in times of confusion or hardship, maybe suffering. And the prophet wrestles with God in chapters 1 through 2.

And he poses some questions and we can ask the same. Have you ever wondered why God allows suffering or injustice to go unchecked?

Habakkuk asks that kind of question. And his journey teaches us how we can move from doubt to trust. Here he is, praying, wrestling with God, this complaining prayer.

As we get to shortly Habakkuk chapter 1. He's miserable, he's shouting, impatient, he's asking for justice.

And in chapter 1 he's questioning. And he asks God two main questions. Why does God allow evil and injustice among his people? And why would God use the wicked Babylonians to punish people more righteous than they?

[3:10] The big question is, if God exists, why do bad things happen? Why do the wicked prosper? So very timeless questions really, because we can still ask the same things, can't we, in our day.

And so let's take a look as we really pick some of the main themes of Habakkuk. Starting from Habakkuk 1 verse 1.

Habakkuk starts off with, you could say, honest doubts. Habakkuk 1 verse 1. The burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see.

The book starts with a burden. It ends with a blessing. God gives a burden. It was a burdensome message. And really, whenever we come to the word of God, which we ought to tremble at, the word of God is not trifling.

It's weighty. It's no light thing. It's heavy. And this is the burden of the prophet. What is this burden? As we come to it, as we unpack it, it's God's judgment on his chosen people, Judah.

[4:18] And his chosen instrument for the judgment was Babylon, with whom he would discipline Judah. So this is the burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see.

Verse 2. And he says, O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear, even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save?

Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me, and there are that raise up strife and contention.

Habakkuk was crying out to God here. It was intense. And the word cry, where he says, how long shall I cry, it's cry out with a loud voice.

Some would say, even scream. I don't know if you've ever screamed at God. But the word here is cry out. And it seems like he is impatient here too. Saying, why isn't God answering?

[5:17] Spurgeon well said that the best thermometer of your spiritual temperature is the intensity of prayer. And Habakkuk's prayer temperature here was red hot.

He was crying out to God. And he speaks of save. He says, that will not save. It's interesting, save here, the root word, is the root name of Jesus.

Yeshua, Jehovah saves. Later Habakkuk calls God the God of my salvation. So the related word Yeshua appears four times in Habakkuk's praise in chapter 3.

So here he's saying, why don't you save? But at the end of the book he says, the God of my salvation. And Yeshua, which speaks of our Lord Jesus. God saves.

Jesus, that's his name. It's been said, God does not have to answer our questions. But he will always keep his promises. And there's questions here that are really timeless questions.

[6:21] And they're not necessarily answered in full. But we know that God's promises he always keeps. It reads on verse 4. Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth.

For the wicked doth compass about the righteous. Therefore wrong judgment proceeded. So Habakkuk's really complaining here. He's saying how it seemed like things were not working out. He saw the unfaithfulness of the people of God. Their need of revival. He knew that Judah was in this disobedience. The law is slacked or ignored.

There was this neglect of the word of God. And the key point here is it's okay to bring your questions to God. Or to be like Habakkuk. Say, Lord, what's happening?

Screaming out, crying out to God. Show me what's going on. And really it's been said that faith is not the absence of questions. But the willingness to seek answers from the one who holds all truth.

[7:25] We're always going to have questions. Believers. Believers. Some of you that are older believers in the faith, you still have questions. I know I do. That we can have questions. We question God.

Like Habakkuk. But he did not question who God is. He was still a believer. He just had questions. And it's okay to bring your complaints directly to God in prayer.

Isn't it? When we pray, sometimes we have a moan of sorts that we cry out to God. Questioning God is not wrong to do. As many biblical figures like Moses had that.

Questioning of God. Jeremiah also. When we pray, sometimes we bring our honest doubts before God. Our frustrations to him. And Habakkuk's frustrated here.

It seems like God is silent. It seems that Judah has got this corruption and violence. This injustice. It's as if God seems inactive.

[8:24] And this is really Habakkuk's heart. It's good to be honest in prayer. When we come to God and pour out our heart. And God is not offended by our doubts. He invites us to bring them to him.

In the context we see Habakkuk, he is wrestling with this corruption of Judah, the moral decay. Why evil seems to prosper. God appears silent.

And these are old age dilemmas. We still have that time. We have times of that too, don't we? When things are not always clear. We've got the similar questions today about injustice and suffering.

Hard things going on in our world. And we know at times we wrestle with doubt. But we can, like Habakkuk, find peace through prayer.

And so we see that God answers Habakkuk. In the next section we see God's unexpected answers. From verse 5, God starts to reveal that he's going to use the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, this wicked, ruthless, ungodly nation for his purposes.

[9:32] And we see that from verse 5. It reads, Behold ye among the heathen and regard and wonder marvelously. For I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

God's telling Habakkuk he's working a work. God is working a work. And he says, Behold, take heed. He's saying the Babylonians are coming.

Judgment is coming. God's judgment. The Lord was going to be stirring up these Babylonians to discipline Judah. From verse 6 it reads, For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

They are terrible and dreadful. Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. So we see this telling dreadful, fearful judgment to come.

The Babylonians were ferocious. They were renowned for really their violence. It's interesting the word where it talks about violent. It's Hamas, which we know speaks to us today.

[10:41] We see verse 8. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves. And their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far.

They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. It's talking about this army, this invading army. And they shall come all for violence. Their faces shall sup as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

So the picture here is of this invading army, these aggressive Babylonians, that they're going to collect captives like the scooping up of sand in your hand.

They're going to gather the captivity. Capture these captives, collect the captives like a scooping up of sand in your hand. And verse 10. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them.

They shall deride every stronghold, for they shall heap dust and take it. Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over and offend, imputing this his power unto his God.

[11:42] The point here is that these Babylonians were going to come, and God was going to use them as much as they were themselves a wicked nation to punish Judah for her sins.

So that even more wicked Babylonians were going to be bringing this judgment of God. And again, it really provokes a question, a truth really, that God's methods don't always align with human expectations.

It's a principle here that we've just got to trust God's wisdom. Even though it seemed strange that these wicked Babylonians were going to be God's instrument of judgment.

It speaks to us of how can we learn to trust God's wisdom when things are not always understandable to our thinking.

And when God's answers surprise or challenge us, of course the word of God shows us that God's ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts.

[12:50] We can trust his promises even in such times that God's promises are going to come through. God promises to work in a way that we would find hard to believe.

And God reveals here that he's going to use the Babylonians as his instrument of judgment. Notice there's a difference between doubt and unbelief. Like Habakkuk, the doubter questions God, may even debate with God.

That's us sometimes, we sometimes doubt, but we don't abandon God. But unbelief is a rebellion against God that refuses to accept what God says.

Unbelief is an act of the will, a defiance. Whereas doubt is just sometimes the troubles that we have of our own questions.

There's nothing wrong for us to question what God is doing. We don't disbelieve when we doubt.

That's okay to doubt. So we see in verse 12 that Habakkuk cries out, Are thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?

[13:56] We shall not die, O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment. And, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Notice here Habakkuk, how he refers to God.

He says, My God. He says, Mine Holy One. It's very personal, isn't it? And God is the everlasting one. The truth here is that we can have a personal relationship with the everlasting one.

A personal relationship. To come to know God personally. That's what Habakkuk knew. God is not impersonal. We can know him personally. We can have a relationship with God.

And God is from everlasting to everlasting. He's got everlasting faithfulness. Our eternal God offers us an eternal security. Habakkuk accepts the fact that God has ordained the Babylonians to be his agent to discipline Judah.

And it reads on verse 13. Habakkuk says to God, Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cast not look on iniquity. Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he.

[15:04] So Habakkuk's recognising God is holy. He cannot tolerate wickedness. But then he questions God's consistency. God is just.

He's holy. But he's questioning why doesn't he take action. And we could wonder that through life. I mean, you go back to Calvary's hell, and we could wonder why would God choose not to bring judgment down on the wicked ones who crucified the righteous one, his very beloved son.

God knows the end of the story. He knows the end of your story. And evil will not prevail. We know that God's unfolding this plan. And so we can learn to trust God's sovereignty because his plan is beyond our human time frame, isn't it?

When the plan seems confusing and unsettling, we can yet trust him. When an unexpected challenge comes, later we're going to see God's purpose in all of it.

Habakkuk is describing Judah here as helpless in the context as like a fish before fishermen. It's like that Judah is going to be in dire straits.

[16:19] We see verse 14. That God makes men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them. They take up all of them with the angle. So the angler, the fisherman, they catch them in their net, and they gather them in their drag.

Therefore they rejoice and are glad. So it's a picture here of the helplessness of Judah. It's like a fish that's going to be captured by the fishermen. And it's interesting, historical Babylonian monuments depict the cruel Chaldeans as having driven a hook through the lower lips of their captives.

So they stuck a hook through their lower lip, and they strung them all together like fish, and they dragged them along, off to their captivity, off to Babylon, like fish on a stream.

Imagine that. They had hooks in their lower lips. All of them hooked together with a line, and the Babylonians dragged them along. Such a cruel, vicious enemy.

And they were victorious. They rejoice and are glad. And then it tells how the Babylonians, these cruel Babylonians, they worshipped their gods of power and violence.

[17:29] Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and they meet plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

So the picture here is these Babylonians, this cruel, vicious enemy, they were conquering and destroying one nation after another. And this cruelty that they would inflict.

And so this is what was coming. This is the burden of Habakkuk. He sees what's coming. And it moves on, chapter 2, to this trusting stage. And there's some truths here that live on still.

The key point here in chapter 2 is that the righteous, the just, will live by faith. And it reads there, this is Habakkuk 2, verse 1.

Of course, he touched on this, writing the vision recently.

[18:31] But we see here Habakkuk as this watchman. And God calls the prophet to this timeless lesson of waiting and watching. So judgment's about to fall.

Habakkuk's saying, I'm going to stand in this vantage point, and I'm going to watch what's going to happen. I'm going to watch what he's going to say unto me. So it's a lesson of waiting and watching.

And that's the same for you and me, brother, sister, isn't it? When we have life situations, we've just got to wait and watch, willing to wait for God to answer, and accepting God's delays too.

Because really, God's delays, he's the one who calls the shots. What might seem a delay to us is actually God's timing. And Habakkuk wanted to hear from God.

He was willing even if God gave him an answer that wasn't going to be easy to swallow. He was expecting to be reproved. So he was expecting correction. And then, as we touched on last time, we talked about the vision.

[19:30] And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run, that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie, though it tarry.

Wait for it, because it will surely come. It will not tarry. Behold his soul, which is lifted up. It's not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.

So, in simple terms, we see that the prophet is watching for the vision. He's waiting for God's answer.

And it's the same for you and me. When we need answers, we've got to be patient. We've got to wait for it, because it will surely come. And it's the truth that, really, for us today, too, to be submissive to the will of God, to be patient.

Notice that the revelation is for an appointed time. Though it linger, we need to wait for it. God's timing's perfect. It's the same for you and me. With whatever we're hoping for in our lives, what we're wanting, we've got to be patient.

[20:36] And let God work according to his timeline, what he wants for us. And there's a practical application here of how can we develop patience and trust in our Lord when there's those seasons of waiting.

Who's had those seasons of waiting? Being patient is an oft-repeated theme in the context of persecution and tests and trials, too.

When there's tests and trials, there's patience and perseverance. They go together. And so this is what Habakkuk had here. Again, God's got his appointed time to unfold things.

And there's this sense of this final and complete destruction of Babylon. As the Bible tells us of the Babylon to come, the end time Babylon, that there will be a final ending of Babylon.

A complete destruction of Babylon as it will be at the end of the world. Hebrews quotes these words about the vision that will surely come. And it speaks of our Lord.

[21:36] It's interesting. When Hebrews quotes these words about the vision that will surely come, it's speaking of a person, the Lord Jesus Christ. He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

Habakkuk had a burden. He had a vision. And he had this message to carry. As it talks about, write the vision that he may run, that readeth it. He's got this picture of a herald running, making this proclamation aloud.

It's a wonderful truth about, really, the message of the Bible that we carry, the message of the gospel. We want to carry that, proclaim it aloud. And Habakkuk waits for God's reply.

And he gets this assurance. Here is the key. Really, it's a fundamental Bible verse that really is central to the word of God.

Faith. Faith. The just shall live by faith. And faith means trusting God, his promises, even when we cannot see the outcome. God responds to us about how to live when life doesn't make sense.

[22:45] We may not always understand the why of what's going on. We may not get an answer. But one thing we have to learn is this key. The just shall live by faith.

Notice it says, behold. Whenever it says, behold, it means this is, get a hold of this, you know. Listen to this. Take a notice of this. Behold. This is one of the most important texts in all of scripture. And God says, behold. This statement is not only central to the theme of Habakkuk, but also of the entire scripture. Live by faith. Now, live does not say that the righteous shall begin by faith and then proceed on some other principle.

It does not say that the righteous shall draw on faith from time to time. It says the righteous will live. It's got this continual sense that the righteous will live continually by faith.

I'm quoting here. The righteous will operate on this principle 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. So long as life lasts.

[23:47] We live by faith. There's so much you could unpack there. Really, we're just scratching the surface. Luther called this verse, which is elsewhere quoted, the just shall live by faith.

He called this verse, I quote, an open door into the very paradise of God. This is how to be saved. The just shall live by faith. Some would try to live by devotions.

Some would try to live by works. Live by feelings or by circumstances. But God says to us, the just shall live by faith. That's how to be saved.

It's faith. It's trusting God. Of course, we know by faith we're justified. By faith we live. By faith we stand. By faith we walk. It's the Christian life, isn't it?

Faith. And we're learning that faith. We're learning to live out that faith day by day, trusting our Lord, leaning upon Him. And in the context of Habakkuk, instead of demanding answers from God, let's move to trusting God.

[24:50] To have faith. Whatever our trial or circumstance, whatever is going on for you, God will bring it to pass. In His good time. We've just got to have that waiting, that patience.

And really, it's the real life story of faith, isn't it? For all of us. That we can know God, even in adversity. We can know God's power. We can know that trust.

That Jesus loves us. We can trust Him for His saving. Another aspect we see in Habakkuk is that God's justice is sure.

The point here, through the next section here of Habakkuk 2, is making the point that God is going to ultimately bring justice. God's judgment will ultimately come upon all that defy His righteousness. And we see that God pronounces woes. Five woes against the Babylonians. So, as much as the Babylonians were God's instrument of punishment on Judah, God sees their wickedness and He pronounces five woes.

[25:56] So, in other words, five judgments against them. He pronounces five woes. For Babylon's greed. For their violence. Their exploitation. Their drunkenness.

And their idolatry. See, verse five tells us of the godless Babylonians. They were never at rest. Never satisfied. We read that there.

Yea, also because He transgresseth by wine. He is a proud man. Neither keepeth He at home. Who enlargeth his desire as hell. And is as death. And cannot be satisfied.

And gathereth unto him all nations. And heapeth unto him all people. Habakkuk's making the point that these Babylonians were really greedy. They were greedy. They wanted more and more.

They wanted to conquer more and more nations. Just like a drunkard wants more and more. More and more. Wine. To satisfy his thirst. But eventually, this greed was going to be their downfall.

[26:55] It's a picture of a proud man. He's a proud man. Never satisfied. Just keeps on grasping for more. And there's a judgment there.

We think of our world today. It's a greedy, grasping world, isn't it? They worship the almighty dollar. And that's a great tragedy. Great mistake. In contrast, the Bible says the Lord is our portion.

The portion of the righteous. It tells further about different forms of judgment. of the pride of Judah. And it shows the self-destructive ways of them.

God says, woe to them. He says, woe to them about their greed and ill-gotten gain. We see that from verse 6. It says, Shall not all these take up a parable against him?

And a taunting proverb against him? And say, woe to him that increase of that which is not his? How long? And to him that ladeth himself with thick clay, shall they not rise up suddenly?

[27:57] That shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee. And thou shalt be for booties unto them. It's talking about this plundering, this ill-gotten gain, that they were taking, increasing by things that were not theirs.

But God says they're going to get judgment for it. The Bible says, Whatever a man sows, that will he reap. And the picture here is how the plunderers are going to be plundered.

So we read that there further in verse 8. Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land of the city, and

of all that dwell therein.

So God's saying, woe to them. You've plundered these other nations, but they're going to plunder you. It's going to come back to you. You reap what you sow. And so God's saying, woe to them, of their arrogant ways, and their self-assertion.

We see here it reads on, Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. He's saying here that some of these folk, they'd set their nest on high.

[29:01] So they thought they were above any judgment, but no, God was going to judge them. It's like, you know, where they're saying they're going to set their nest on high.

It's like their ancestors said, Come, let us build a tower. Let us build for ourselves a city, a tower whose top will reach into heaven. That was the spirit of Babylon. They wanted to be high and mighty, like their ancestors.

And God says, woe to them. He says, woe to you. Because they were facing judgment. And we think of our world today, the pridefulness, the covetousness of our world, the worldly ways.

This world has just got no thought for God. They're all consumed with such things. And even a thirst for bloodshed. We see modern video games, this violence, this thirst for violence.

And God says, woe to them for these things of violence. We see verse 12. Woe to him that buildeth the town with blood, and establisheth the city by iniquity. Behold, it is not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity.

[30:08] We know this world is consumed with that. He's talking about the Babylonians, these rulers. They're building their cities with blood, sweat, and tears. They were known for bloodshed.

God says, woe to them. Judgment's coming to the Babylonians. And then he says, this brighter verse here, verse 14, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Verse 14 answers all of that negativity of the woes, the five woes. He says, one day the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Verse 14 tells of the hope, the Christian hope, the blessed hope. As this world grows darker, as there's so many woes in this woeful world, the promise of the return of the Son of God, it grows brighter, doesn't it?

As this world grows darker, the promise of his coming grows brighter for us that believe. What a joy that we can know. We can know him. We can know him now. Before the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth, we can know him in the here and now.

[31:12] The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. What a joy that we can know, to know God, not just know about God. God continues the woes of the way that the Babylonians treated people and acted disgracefully.

And God says, woe to them. It's going to come back to haunt them. We see, for example, verse 15, woe unto him, that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him.

Makest him drunken also, that they must look on their nakedness. It's this woe of this drunkenness, the woe to them for such a thing. And then chapter 2 ends with this truth, that the Lord is in his holy temple.

Another woe here, just at the end of chapter 2, is God says, woe to the Babylonians because of their idol worship. He rebukes the vanity of idol worship.

Now we can think of our world where there's not so much idol worship in Australia, but really there is. The Australian idol. There's Australian idols, aren't there? And God rebukes idol worship.

[32:16] So really, it's whenever we may put our trust in something of our own making, our own creation, and we fail to worship and bow down to the Creator. We see verse 18, what profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof hath graven it, the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols.

He's talking about idols of word, of stone, of clay, of metal, and he's saying these are dumb idols. They can't speak. There's no mouth to speak. Well, they've got a mouth, but it can't speak in these idols.

And it says there, woe to him that saith to the word, awake, to the dumb stone, arise, and it shall teach. Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. Habakkuk's recording here, that graven images, these statues, these images are vain. There's no breath in them. And as much as you might say to the wood, wake up, or to the stone, the stony statue, arise, and teach us, they can't.

[33:31] Even though they're laid over with gold and silver, there's no breath at all in the midst of them. But then verse 27, I'm going to brighten note, but the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.

We see in contrast to the vain idols of this world, there's no breath at all in them. The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.

We know the final outcome of human history will be the worship of our God. The Lord is in his holy temple, the worship of our holy God. And here's the truth that we can apply, we can trust God's justice in this statement here of all the woes, of all the judgments, of all the vanities, of the world's ways, and the Babylonians, the picture, really, I guess, the unsaved, the godless.

we see the worship of the one true God here. Here's the truth that we can apply, that God's justice, though delayed, is certain, it's perfect. The Lord is in his holy temple, and we can rest in that assurance.

Even when things of life are hard for us, we can know the Lord is in his holy temple, amen? And we can rest in that assurance. And then to the last part of the book, Habakkuk moves from questioning God to worship.

[34:48] And chapter 3 is the prophet resting in God. He's praising. Chapter 3 is a prayer.

Notice there, verse 1. It's a prayer set to music. It's a composed praise. Habakkuk 3 designates this chapter as a prayer. And it's noticeable that Habakkuk has just two petitions.

Revive your work, make it known, and remember mercy. Habakkuk's here, he's peaceful now. Remember at the start what Habakkuk was like? He was doubting, he was confused, he was questioning.

Now he's peaceful, and he's singing, and he's patient. And through the book, Habakkuk moves from questioning, questioning God, to now praising God despite the circumstances.

So it's a real turnaround, a transformation. Verse 1, a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth, some kind of instrument.

[35:51] O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known, in wrath, remember mercy.

Habakkuk prays knowing well that God's people, they don't deserve revival. Here they were in this rebellion, in this backslidden state, in this confusion, in this distant relationship to God.

They didn't deserve revival, but he prays for mercy. He prays for mercy. Habakkuk recalls God's faithfulness as a basis for his present trust.

And as we look at this last chapter of Habakkuk 3, what does the prophet do? He declares God's praise. He declares God's glory. And it reads there, verse 3, God came from Timan and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah.

In other words, think about this, meditate on this. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. You know, these verses in Habakkuk 3, it's really one of the most magnificent descriptions of the glory of God in the Bible.

[37:09] It's full of the glory of God. It's full of the wonder of praise, of worship. And verse 4, And his brightness was as the light. He had horns coming out of his hand and there was the hiding of his power.

Some put it, it's like rays of glory breaking through. The brightness was as the light. We see the bright and morning star, our Lord Jesus. Don't we hear the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We see God's glory breaking out. Though God is hiding still. He's still hiding. He's not a full revelation, but we catch this glimpse here of God's glory, of his brightness, of the light.

We see his awesome power, of his judgment. Verse 5, Before he went the pestilence and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stirred and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations and the everlasting mountains were scattered.

the perpetual hills did bow. His ways are everlasting. There's lots of glory and adoration and praise here. We see the wonder, the awesomeness of God.

[38:16] We see the everlasting ways of God. And God is glorified here through Habakkuk. And Habakkuk tells of God's works as it reads on, The mountains saw thee and they trembled.

The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered his voice and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation. At the light of thine arrows they went and at the shining of thy glittering spear.

So a lot of glorifying of God here. The wonder of God, the majesty of God, God's power is revealed and God's wrath too. And friends, when God's wrath is revealed it's always perfectly righteous. God's wrath is always rightful and righteous. Even in judgment, God is just and perfect. Chapter 3 concludes with a powerful statement of faith.

Just come to that last section of chapter 3 now, there's this powerful declaration of faith, this statement of faith. Faith despite adversity, faith despite difficulty, faith despite adverse conditions, faith even if everything fails, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

[39:29] We'll come to that in the last section here, Habakkuk 3 from verse 17. And the key point here is rejoicing in God's sovereignty, knowing that we're under his hand, we're in his control, and we can rejoice whatever befalls.

The key point here is that faith enables us to rejoice even in trials. And this is a repeated theme through the word of God. Faith enables us to rejoice even in trials, as again I touched on of late too, that faith helps us to get through, that we can keep praising.

Habakkuk shifts from complaining to worshipping. And here we see the final verses of Habakkuk, it's a conclusion with a song of triumph in his lips.

Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Though the fig tree does not blossom. Now, we've always got probably a bit of a safety net in Australia, there's always some kind of payment or welfare or something to help us out, but when the fig tree does not blossom and there's no welfare system, we go hungry, we go hungry.

[41:02] He says, yeah, I will, yeah, I will rejoice in the Lord. And think of it, when he's saying I'm going to rejoice in the Lord, it's in this context of total devastation. In other words, it's absolutely hopeless.

There's just no way to make it without food. He says, yeah, I will, yeah, I will rejoice in the Lord. His complete trust in the face of complete loss, isn't it?

And we see Habakkuk's transformation from doubt as we started to faith. He had doubt there, but we see his faith is strengthened and it becomes a rejoicing faith.

Habakkuk was choosing praise even in difficult times. And what a testimony that speaks to us too. If we can take a hold of these principles, of this book, of these truths, how can we also make that such that we can apply that to choose praise?

Here we see the nature of true joy again, that joy exists independently of circumstances. And notice Habakkuk's choice to rejoice despite impending disaster.

[42:13] It looked hopeless. He says, yet I will, yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will enjoy in the God of my salvation. How can we apply this to our lives today?

Brother, sister, this truth is relevant to us too. This is timeless truth. We can find sustainable joy in our God. Not in the changing situations, which might be contrary.

We can make practical application here to learn to find joy. The joy is in God. The joy is in God. I will enjoy in the God of my salvation.

In God's unchanging nature. Not in our changing circumstances. And believe that here tonight, when we praise God in time of hardship, we can find strength there.

We can find our strength in Him. That He is the strength that we need. So just to recap Habakkuk's journey, he went from doubt, chapter 1, to faith, chapter 2, to joy, chapter 3.

[43:20] Habakkuk experiences this personal transformation along the way. Habakkuk moves from arguments to acceptance. He moves from questioning to trusting, from focusing on present circumstances to actually see God's bigger picture.

He shifts from demanding judgment to pleading for mercy. He comes to a final declaration of faith despite his circumstances, regardless of his circumstances, circumstances, and he concludes with a song of praise.

I will rejoice. A song of praise despite the circumstances. And the prophecy here, the prophet ends his book with a note of renewed trust and joy in God.

how can we perhaps take a leaf out of Habakkuk's book? How can we make some practical application and maybe take some of these salient verses that we can take them to heart, that they might speak to us, God might quicken them to us to take these verses and think, how can I make practical application of these same truths?

We can learn that life will have unanswered why questions. Why questions, we don't always get the answer to them. Not plain and simple, maybe we'll get some sign or other, but really we don't always get them answered, those questions of life.

[44:50] So we can spend time tormenting ourselves with questions, or we can trust God's ultimate fundamental goodness. The Lord is good.

The Lord is good. The Lord is good. Four words. That's a principle, isn't it? That's a promise. That's a statement. That's a declaration. The Lord is good.

And so when life is not always good, the Lord is good, we can hang on to that and we can trust that God's fundamentally good and he will do good and ultimately good will come out of all the bad, all the mess of life sometimes.

And notice that it says by faith we live. Faith isn't just for salvation but for daily living. The just shall live by faith. It's that truth where of course the saving faith at that moment we trust him, but the just shall live by faith.

It's a lifestyle, it's a living, isn't it? A daily living, the just shall live by faith. So day by day, each moment of every day, of every hour of every day, of every minute, of every hour, the just shall live by faith.

[46:02] It's a continual faith, it's a continual trusting him, the just shall live by faith. And so also life's going to have some mysteries that we're not going to be able to unravel.

God's ways are higher than our ways, his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. It says that in Isaiah 55, he says for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. When you get that truth and you realise that, yeah, actually, my limited brain space can only contain so much, knowledge, but God's mind, God's thoughts are way more than I can ever think.

We can only have a little, a token of knowledge really, can't we? And sometimes when we think we've got knowledge, knowledge puffeth up. We can get so high and mighty when we get a bit of knowledge to think we know it all.

But no, God says my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. And so, let's be humble. Even when we have some knowledge, let's not let it go to our head. And then, finally, the last verse of Habakkuk, chapter 3, verse 19, it reads, the Lord God is my strength.

[47:30] There's a lot there, isn't there? Just that statement alone, the Lord God is my strength. Brother, sister, you might be feeling weak, unanswered questions like Habakkuk, doubts, fears, worries, life's turmoils at times and questions.

The Lord God is my strength. I'm so weak, the Lord God is my strength. I'm so inadequate, the Lord God is my strength. And he will make my feet like hind's feet, so like a feet of a deer on the hillside. I don't know if you've ever seen, sometimes you see pictures of goats on this near vertical cliff. And you think, how could they even walk on such a thing? He's going to make your feet like that. You can navigate the toughest terrain, the most vertical of landscapes.

He's going to make my feet like hind's feet. And he will make me to walk upon my high places, to the chief singer on my stringed instruments. The Habakkuk here, we see this progress of Habakkuk, this transformation of Habakkuk from where he started, from questioning, to trusting, to praising.

Think of that. I'm trying to keep it relatively simple truth we can put in our kit bag and take home with us today. That if you take anything from this message, that we can move from questioning to trusting, from trusting to praising.

[49:11] Our faith will move us to praise. Our trust will move us to praise. And we see here the sure footedness of God's people.

We might think, well, I'm always stumbling, I'm always fouling up, I'm always slipping and sliding. There's a sure footedness for you.

It says here, Psalm 18, 36, the psalmist says, thou hast enlarged my steps unto me, that my feet did not slip. It's talking about a stable foundation.

He's saying here that God's going to put your steps in a sure way so that your feet are not going to slip. It's a picture here of how the Lord God gives us stability. He guides our feet to a safe and secure path.

Brother, sister, God will guide your feet. He'll give you the feet of faith to walk in those high places so you're not going to slip. You can know God's going to watch over you.

[50:12] And, well, if it does happen that you slip, it says the righteous fall seven times, the Lord picks him up every time, time after time after time. And so, even when you do slip, God's there to pick you up and get you back on your feet again.

Amen. I need that. I need that all the time. So, to sum up here of Habakkuk, we've got a model here. There's some of these things, of course, there's some complexities with all of that, but the simple truths here we can apply in our own life.

When we got doubts and questions, hey, that's normal. Habakkuk had them, and so do we. We have doubts. There's truths in this book that are hard to unravel.

There's doctrines even that are hard to articulate and to exposit and declare and teach, let alone to learn them ourselves.

We see the processing of doubts and questions, that's normality of life, isn't it? Questions and doubts about faith. Don't lose heart when you question.

[51:22] Maintain that hope through the sufferings of the injustices. As we saw Habakkuk, he was wondering, what's going on? Everything's going wrong. Judah's in this state of misery, of backsliding, the Babylonians are coming, it's all over.

But he maintained hope such that he could have trust and even praise and find peace, that God's answers, sometimes we got to wait for them.

They don't always match our expectations. Develop that patient trust during those waiting times and choose joy. During difficulty, choose joy regardless of your circumstances.

Choose joy even though you don't want to have joy. Choose joy even though it's the last thing you feel like is joy that you can rejoice. And you can have faith that grows through that honest dialogue with God.

Even if you're crying out to God sometimes, Lord, I need help. He wants to hear you cry out. And the message of Habakkuk is an encouragement, isn't it?

[52:26] For believers to maintain faith through difficult times, to trust God's sovereignty even when circumstances seem unjust. We see what's going on in the world and there's many things with modern media.

You can see so much horror, actual horror in technicolor of what's going on. And you wonder there's a lot of injustice. promises. But the Lord is good.

The Lord is good. He will see truth prevail. He will see an overruling. His sovereignty, his control is ultimately the absolute.

We can trust that hope of the Messiah's return. man, that one day the knowledge of the glory of God is going to cover the earth. One day we'll see his face.

He will come and he will establish his kingdom, his righteousness. He'll come and take us to himself. Can I urge you beloved to trust him, to trust God today in all your struggles, that you'll find

the faith that stands and says, yet I will.

[53:37] yet I will rejoice in the Lord. He will make my feet like hinds feet. The Lord God is my strength. We can make this our prayer and declaration of faith.

Can I urge you beloved, trust God despite your struggles. You might say preacher, look, things are hard. I don't know how I'm going to cope. The fig tree is not blossoming.

I've got no herd in the stall. I've got nothing. It's like it's desperate times. Be like Habakkuk and say, yet I will. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

The Lord God is my strength. Let us pray. Lord our God, we thank you that one day your glory is going to fill this world. One day we know as you'll come ultimately in your kingdom, Lord, you'll take us to yourself.

Lord, we know that you will vanquish Babylon in the ultimate time. Lord, we know that we have your promises. That they are yea and amen. Even though the complexities of life, the struggles we face from day to day, sometimes we would doubt and question.

[54:46] Yet Lord, we still believe. We still trust. And our faith will be strengthened. We pray for every heart, every home here. Lord, for each one to have that heart's trust.

To be one who says, I've called on the name of the Lord. I've called on Jesus to be my saviour. Lord Jesus, save me from my sin. Forgive me.

Receive me as your beloved. Lord, I pray that each one might have that trust to call upon you, to trust you, to know you. And Lord, to know as much as there's lots we don't know, to know that your plan is the best plan.

To trust you even when it's hard to trust. To trust you even when there's uncertainty and we foul up or there's questions that we don't have answers to, Lord, that we still keep trusting because we know the just shall live by his faith.

Lord, we want that faith that has that life, that everyday life. We'll live that faith out. We'll walk out that faith in our life. We'll live by faith in you, our Lord God.

[55:57] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.