

You can trust God.

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[0 : 00] Okay. If you've got your Bibles, I encourage you to go ahead and find the book of Habakkuk.

! Habakkuk. Habakkuk. Habakkuk. I don't know. It's on the, it's Habakkuk. Yeah. It's towards the end of the Old Testament.

If you get to Matthew, you've gone too far. If you're at Psalms, you need to go to the right. In truly inspired books of the Bible, it's on page 876. So we'll see how good your translation is.

Next week, we're going to be looking at Zephaniah. I know these are great, these are great books that we, we just don't get enough, spend enough time in. Nobody pay attention to the pastor.

I feel better now. If I was to mention to you Daniel Penny, do you know who I'm talking about?

[1 : 22] He was the individual that saw something happening on the subway, tried to restrain the guy, the guy dies, and he ended up in all sorts of legal trouble.

Do you know in Puyallup over the week, this last week, there was a guy who came out and was literally murdering his stepchildren and his neighbor came and put a stop to it.

And now his neighbor, the one who put a stop to the murdering, he's under investigation. George Floyd, man totally drugged out, doped up in the midst of doing heinous things.

The police restrain him, he dies possibly because of the drugs. And who goes to jail? The policeman. Me personally, I am heartbroken, I am stressed out, I don't understand why that which is right, that which is true, and that which is just is so perverted in our land.

I don't understand why criminals have more rights than those who do what is good. I am freaked out when I think about all that is going on in our world.

[2 : 49] And I don't believe that I'm alone. In fact, I know I'm not alone, okay? And maybe you're standing on that same precipice looking at what's happening in our society and you're getting bald spots because you're pulling out your hair.

If you are, then today's for you. Today's a great day because Habakkuk was in that same position. And we're going to take a look at that today.

But before we do that, I just want to point out, Habakkuk lived towards the end of the divided kingdom.

Down here, oh, right around the year 600. The northern ten tribes have already been taken captive by the Assyrians. And the Babylonians are beginning to dominate world events.

And you can see them on the horizon. The Assyrians right now still have power. But the Babylonians are beginning to rise up.

[4 : 00] And that's when Habakkuk wrote this book of prophecy. Habakkuk teaches, emphasized, and lives this truth.

You can trust God. Understand, I know the feeling where you live and you experience hard things. You know, we started off with this idea of there are things going on that we don't understand. And things that chew us up. And we just don't get it.

That's where Habakkuk is. Where he stands and he looks and he doesn't understand. And I'm going to tell you, you can trust God.

So if you've got your Bible open to Habakkuk, we're going to start at the beginning. And this is the oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw. And the first thing you need to understand is Habakkuk is unique among all the prophets.

[5 : 15] Because he doesn't have a prophecy for nobody. He's not standing there saying, Israel, you'd better repent. He's not standing there saying, the Babylonians, you better change your life.

He doesn't have a prophecy for nobody. What he has is a conversation between himself and God. Habakkuk, the man of God, is standing there and he's seeing the events that are going on.

And he's got all these questions. And Habakkuk is just an account of Habakkuk's conversation with God. And the conclusion that Habakkuk comes to.

So let's start off here in Habakkuk chapter 1, verse 1. The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear?

Or cry to you, violence, and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity? And why do you idly look at wrong?

[6 : 18] Okay, hold on, hold on, just a second. The prophet's perspective is this. He's standing there. And it says, why do I cry for help and you do not hear?

Do you ever get that feeling that you're like, God, give me a hand and God doesn't pay attention? I know, we would never feel that because we are truly spiritual people, right?

Or how about this? Habakkuk's on the sideline and he's going, look God, violence, there's evil happening over there. And God does nothing about it. Or how about this one?

Why do you make me to see iniquity and why do you idly look at wrong? Do you ever get the feeling you're like, God, it's right here.

Do something about it. And you're just standing up there watching television. You ever feel like that's how it goes with God? Where you're trying to point stuff out and he's not paying attention.

[7 : 24] That's what Habakkuk is saying. 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.

So the law is paralyzed and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous. So justice goes forth perverted.

Is it just me or does that describe what's happening right now? Righteous people are going around saying, Look at what's going on. And evil people are walking around going, That's right.

Got it. And that frustration. That feeling of desperation. That's exactly the conversation Habakkuk has with God.

So the first challenge. Habakkuk, distressed by what he sees, calls out to God. He's like, God, are you not paying attention?

[8 : 31] God. Anybody here ever done that? Reached out to God and said, Hey, God. But see, what's unique is that right here, God answers.

And we get a record of that. And it is not the answer that you're expecting. In fact, God answers. And he says, Wonder and be astounded.

Check this out. Pick it up in verse 5. God responds to Habakkuk. And he says, 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. Just stop for a second. Could you imagine just one day you're in your normal time of prayer before the Lord.

And all of a sudden you hear this voice. And it says, Hello. I am listening. And you wouldn't believe it if I told you what I was doing.

[9 : 42] That's the response that Habakkuk gets. He says, Look among the nations and see.

Wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not even believe if I told you.

For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans. The Chaldeans is another term for Babylonians. Right? Okay? I'm raising up the Babylonians. That bitter and hasty nation.

Who march through the breadth of the earth to seize dwellings not their own. Wait a minute. I raised my hand to the Lord and I said, Look, man, there's violence and there's injustice going on.

Evil is spreading. And you're telling me that you're lifting up the Babylonians? These terrible, unholy, vicious people?

And you're going to use them? And God's going, Told you you wouldn't believe it. It's exactly what's happening. In fact, if you read through this, Verse 7, They are dreaded and fearsome.

[10 : 51] Their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Not true justice. Their brand of justice. Their horses are swifter than leopards, More fierce than the evening wolves.

Their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar. They fly like an eagle, swift to devour. They all come for violence.

What? All they've faces forward. They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff. At rulers they laugh.

They laugh at every fortress. They pile up the earth and take it. They sweep by like the wind and go on. Guilty men whose own might is their God.

All right. All right. All right. Hezekiah is paying attention to what's going on in the world.

[11:51] And he sees evil and injustice. And he cries out to Jehovah. He says, Dear God, Are you paying attention? And God responds, Yeah, Hezekiah, I am.

In fact, I've got a plan. You're not going to believe it. Let me tell you what I'm going to do. I'm sorry. Habakkuk. Forgive me, my dear.

Habakkuk cries out to God. Look, they're not normal everyday names. I got it confused. Habakkuk cries out to God. God responds to Habakkuk and says, Habakkuk, you're not going to believe what I'm going to do?

Because I've got a plan for the Babylonians or the Chaldeans. I am going to lift them up. They are a wicked. They are a violent.

They are a vicious people. In fact, their own power is their God. What does it mean that their might is their God?

[13:05] It means this. Your God is that which you honor. Your God is that which you obey and follow.

And the Babylonians believed because they were strong enough that they had the right on their side. They could do whatever they wanted because they had power.

Habakkuk turns to God, wondering about the violence and the evil that is going on in the world. And God says, buckle up, baby, because I got news for you.

Now, believe it or not, Habakkuk hears the word of the Lord and he responds. And that's what we catch here at the end of chapter 2, where he begins to respond.

Let's see, where am I? End of chapter 1, beginning of chapter 2. Verse 12. Habakkuk responds, Are you not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?

[14:24] We shall not die. You who are purer of 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 a man more righteous than he?

You make mankind like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. He brings all of them up with a hook and drags them out with his net.

He gathers them in his dragnet, so he rejoices and is glad. Now, Habakkuk responds to God. God says, hey, I'm going to do something and you're not even going to believe it.

And Habakkuk's response is this. God, you know what's going on.

You've got all this power. Now, you've promised us that you've got a purpose for us as your children, meaning the nation of Israel. So we're not going to die, but you're going to do something.

[15:27] Now, wait a minute. You're holy and righteous, but yet you're letting these evil people do these things? Look down here at verse 1 of chapter 2.

Habakkuk wraps up his response by saying this. I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what he, that is God, will say to me.

And what I will answer concerning my complaint. So Habakkuk, who said, look, violence is happening and what are you doing about it, God?

And God responds, what I'm going to do about it is raise up the Babylonians. This causes Habakkuk to scratch his head and say, I don't understand.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to stand here on the wall and I'm going to watch and I'm going to see what God's doing and hopefully I can figure it out. And God responds to that.

[16:30] That's what the next part of chapter 2 is about, is God's response to Habakkuk looking for understanding. And he tells him this.

Read it with me. Read it with me. Verse 2. Okay, after Habakkuk says, I'm going to stand on the wall and try and figure out what's going on, God says, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so that he may run who reads it.

Basically, God tells Habakkuk, I'm going to answer you and I want you to write him on billboards so that people traveling at speed can figure it out. That's basically what he's telling him.

And then the rest of this chapter, after he gets down here, says, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so he who runs may read it.

For still the vision awaits its appointed time. It hastens to the end. It will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come.

[17:39] It will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up. It is not upright within him. But the righteous shall live by his faith. Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest.

His greed is as wide as Sheol. His death, he has never enough. Like death, he never has enough. He gathers for himself all nations and he collects as his own all peoples.

All right. So here's what God says. This is what's going on. The righteous, what did you say? The righteous shall live by anybody? By faith.

The wicked man's going to go out and he's going to do all this stuff. And I got a word for him. And I want you to write it down. I want you to put it on billboards so that even people traveling fast can see it.

Right? Like, we're all familiar with billboards, aren't we? We don't see them too much in Leavenworth, but when you go over on the wrong side of the hill, they're everywhere. You can drive down, you know, stop here and buy this or look at this person, vote for me or whatever.

[18 : 45] You know what I'm talking about because you've been around. So verse 6 down through, what is it? Oh, verse 20, there's 1, 2, 3, 4, and a fifth.

Billboards or tablets or posters that Habakkuk is supposed to put and present. These are what the five different billboards are.

Billboard number one. Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own. You see that there?

I think it's verse 7. Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own. You know what that means, right? Somebody who takes what isn't his, which is what the Babylonians were doing, which, by the way, is what a lot of people in Israel were doing.

Thankfully, nobody in America or even the whole world is taking things that don't belong to them today, right? We don't have to worry about thievery. We don't have to worry about stealing.

[20 : 00] In the last couple of weeks, I've had three different people walk up to me and say, you need to lock your tools up because somebody's stealing tools up and down the chum stick. Three different people have told me that.

Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own. Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell in them.

Warning number one. Woe number one. Billboard number one. Woe to the thief for the blood of man and violence to the earth.

Billboard number two. Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house. This doesn't necessarily mean thievery.

Do you know how you can get evil gain? They make fun of this in a lot of movies, you know. It fell off the back of the truck. You know, you go by and somebody's selling a refrigerator for a ridiculous price.

[21 : 29] Brand new, barely scuffed refrigerator. Normally \$1,200. Yours for 45 bucks. How can you sell it so cheap?

It fell off the back of the truck. That's an evil gain. You are buying stolen goods. You know what this is talking about.

People who have deals that are too good to be true because they are too good to be true. It says, Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house.

You know, when you buy stolen goods, you might not have stolen the goods, but you're aiding and abetting the thief.

when you go around the law knowingly, you're not doing what's right.

[22 : 31] Woe to you. And he says, for the very stones will cry out from the wall and the beam from the woodwork will respond. Here's the idea.

If you build up your house and let's say, okay, let's put it back in Habakkuk's times and you you hire workers to build your stone wall that are they're illegal.

They're cutting the corners. Whatever. Those stones will stand up and bear witness against you. Let's say you hire really cheap labor.

It will stand up against you. Nobody else may know, but the actual work that is done apparently is going to stand up and testify against you.

Do you remember when Jesus was riding into town and all the people were shouting, Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And the priests were telling Jesus, tell your disciples to be quiet.

[23 : 45] And what did Jesus tell them? If they shut up, what's going to happen? The very stones will cry out. Same situation here.

You may think you'd get away with it, but the very stones and woodwork will cry out against you. Billboard number three. Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity. Let's say you go out there and you establish your town because you've wiped out all the previous inhabitants and you're setting up your community. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord and you won't get away with it.

Billboard number four. Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink so he can stare at them. Woe to those people who set their neighbors up for failure.

Beware of this. Now maybe you're not out there leaving wine around for your neighbors to get drunk, but maybe you're taking advantage of them in bad situations.

[25 : 02] Maybe you see somebody who's in jeopardy and you think, ha ha, I have an opportunity and I'm going to take advantage of it. Woe.

Woe. Woe. Woe to those who build up, who heaps up profits that's not his own.

Woe to him who gains profit by evil. Woe to him who builds a town on blood. Woe to him who takes advantage of his neighbors. Basically, it all boils down to the fifth billboard.

Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, awake, to a stone, arise. basically, woe to those who worship anything other than Jehovah.

It's called idolatry. When you put your agenda ahead of God's, when you place your desires before Jehovah's, whenever you set yourself up who says to a wooden thing, awake, God is in his holy temple.

[26 : 28] He knows what's going on. So here's Habakkuk. Habakkuk is looking at the world around him and he's seeing all sorts of evil that's going on and he raises his hand to God and says, hey, God, bad things are happening down here.

Are you paying attention? Are you paying attention? God says, not only Habakkuk am I paying attention, I've got a plan.

My plan involves the Babylonians. I know they're bad people, but don't worry about it. I can use all things to bring about my glory. Ever read Romans chapter 8?

Habakkuk goes, huh, huh, I wonder how this is going to work. You're going to use evil people to bring about your glory?

God says, yep, and you're going to help me. You're going to write these things down so even the bad people don't have any excuses. we live in days where evil is going on, just like Habakkuk.

[27 : 59] And just as God told Habakkuk that he could use evil men to bring about his glory, God today has promised us that he can use all circumstances to bring about his glory and good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

We today stand in the very same spot as Habakkuk where we look around us and we see things like the man who defended the step children and now he's under investigation by the police.

We stand in days where people like Daniel Penny rise up to protect others and spends the next couple of years defending himself in court.

where George Floyd, a violent criminal drug dealer ne'er-do-well whose life is finally taken by the drugs and the activities that he's done and some poor helpless cop who's there trying to do his job ends up in prison.

We live in days where evil and evil men and evil doings seem to prosper. And yet God says I'm doing this to bring about my glory.

[29 : 43] That's the same position Habakkuk was in. And we are faced with the same choice that Habakkuk faced.

how are we going to respond? And that's what chapter three is all about in this book. I know it's a long sermon.

I'm taking my time going through it. Sorry about that. But I'm really not that sorry. Because the reality is we face this trouble today where we stand amongst events and we see situations that are happening and we're like I don't get it God.

Why is it that it seems like evil is triumphing and good is being defeated? Why is it when we see that good people suffer and evil individuals rise up in power?

I don't understand. And God stands up and he says I want you to live by faith. I want you to trust me.

[30 : 51] I want you to tell people that I have a plan. I want you to remind people that if you are trying to do this world's if you are trying to gain success by doing that which is wrong, I am going to

hold you accountable.

I want you to go out and remind people that even if they think they're getting away with it, they're not because not only am I paying attention, but the very earth is paying attention.

Look at chapter 3 with me. Pick it up in verse 5.

You know, Habakkuk starts this final word with a description of God bringing judgment. So let's just read the whole chapter.

Woe to the bloodiest city, all full of lies and plunder, no end to the prey. The crack of the whip and the rumble of the wheel, the galloping horse and the bounding chariot, horsemen charging, flashing sword and glittering spear, hosts of slain, heaps of corpses, dead bodies without end.

[32 : 17] They stumble over all the bodies, all for the countless whoring of the prostitute, graceful and of deadly charms, who betray nations with their whorings and people with their charms.

Behold, I am against you, declares the Lord of hosts, and will lift up your skirts over your face. I will make nations look at your nakedness and kingdoms at your shame. I will throw filth at you and treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle.

And all who look at you will shrink from you and say, wasted is Nineveh. Who will grieve? I am in the wrong chapter. What is going on?

I'm like, this is not what I was supposed to be reading. I mean, it's close, but it's not quite. I was in Nahum. I'm supposed to be in Habakkuk. What's going on?

[33 : 19] This is great. Don't you love it when everything works out perfect? Habakkuk chapter 3. A prayer of Habakkuk. That's better. The prophet. O Lord, I have heard the report of you and your work, O Lord, do I fear.

Is that closer to what you were reading? Okay, now, it's similar, but this is better. O Lord, I have heard the report of you and your work, O Lord, do I fear.

In the midst of years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy. That's the setup. Now, this is what God's going to do.

God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His splendor covered the heavens. The earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like light, rays flashed from His hand, and there He veiled His power.

Before Him went pestilence and plague followed at His heels. He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. The eternal mountains were scattered.

[34 : 34] The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of cushion in affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the river or your indignation against the sea when you rode on your horses, on your chariots of salvation?

You stripped the sheath from your bow and call for many arrows. The mountains saw you and withered. The raging waters swept on.

The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high. The sun stood still in their place. The sun and moon stood still in their place.

And the light of your arrows as they sped at the flashing of your glittering spear. You marched through the earth in fury.

[35 : 34] you threshed the nations in anger. You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed.

You crushed the head of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. You pierced with his own arrows the head of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me.

rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters. I hear my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sound, rottenness enters into my bones, my legs tremble beneath me.

I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon the people who invade us. All right, this is what's going on.

Habakkuk is seeing all of that's going on in the world around him and he says, hey, God, bad things are happening to good people. Violence and evil are going on. God says, I know.

[36 : 46] I'm going to use the Babylonians to deal with it. I don't understand, God. I know. Be patient and watch. And then Habakkuk gets this vision.

It starts with the Assyrians who are leading this terrible crushing and then the Babylonians come and they destroy them and then God delivers the people.

And the whole time, he, Habakkuk, the little guy, the righteous one, is seeing all of this go on around him and he's suffering and he's being caught between these mighty world powers and things are happening to him and it's back and forth and in the end, God.

And this is Habakkuk's conclusion. Verse 17. The final word.

Habakkuk starts with the description of God bringing judgment. It is overwhelming and it is terrible. And he uses the mighty forces of the world to make this happen.

[38 : 05] The Assyrians and the Babylonians. And there's little Habakkuk caught in the maelstrom. But check this out.

Though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit beyond the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the field yields no food.

The flock be cut off from the folds and there be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. Do you understand this? I know you do. There are times where there's no food. There are times there are no crops.

We don't understand this because we've got Safeway. Praise the Lord. Right? We don't understand this because at any point in time we can head down to Walmart and we can load up our shopping cart and go home.

[39 : 23] But do you understand what it means to wait the entire year and have no crops? It means devastation and starvation.

you've got to wait an entire calendar year and you've got to figure out how to feed your family for a whole year with no crops.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. You know there are people who live and make their money and they're living and they take care of their families and their bills and all of that by the number of cattle or sheep that they've got to sell to market.

And what does he say? The flock be cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls. When I am broke and destitute and I have got nothing and all I can look forward to is season of starvation, of deprivation, of debt and struggle.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

[40 : 58] God the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deer's feet. He makes me tread on my high places. Look, my friends, this is the conclusion.

This is the lesson. Habakkuk was looking at the world around him and he was seeing that it was full of evil. And he was going, hey God, there are bad things that are happening all around.

bad people are triumphing over good people. And there are good people that are starving and they're being run over. Hey God, are you paying attention?

And God says, yep. In fact, some of those evil things that are going on, I'm going to use to bring about my glory. And Habakkuk said, I don't understand.

And God showed him a vision of how he would use evil things to bring about his glory. And that would involve suffering and hardship from the people of God.

[42 : 15] And Habakkuk, when he saw that, he stopped and he said, even in days of hunger, distress, even in days of suffering, I will rejoice in the Lord.

I will take my joy in the God of my salvation. You see, Habakkuk learned to take his eyes off of this world and place them on God.

Habakkuk was able to see past the hardship of today into the glory of the eternal. Remember what he said back here? Where he said this, that the righteous will live by his faith?

That means that the righteous will endure hard times and go through difficult days. The righteous will go from top to bottom, from top to bottom, maybe even drag across the bottom for a while, will endure hardship by faith.

You want to know what the conclusion of the book of Habakkuk is? A man who lived in evil days, who saw hard things, who endured and watched those around him, those he loved, suffer and endure hard things?

[43 : 52] Do you know what the conclusion of this book is? Habakkuk standing there, seeing all of this go around and hearing the word of God, his conclusion was this, I will trust God.

God, my friends, you're going to see bad things. My friends, we live in a fallen world.

You are going to be called upon to endure hardship. you will see evil men and evil women with wealth, with prosperity, with fame and fortune.

You will see those whose only intent is to do evil succeed right next to righteous men and women who can't feed their children.

you will see injustice in this world and you will have the same choice that Habakkuk faced.

[45 : 21] What are you going to do? Will you in anger raise your fist at God and say, God, how can you be there? how can you be good? I don't believe you.

You say that you can do mighty things through evil days. I don't believe you and you can go your own way. Good luck with that. I've seen the end of that road.

Would you like a small picture of it? Let me give you a small picture of it. There once was a man incredibly talented.

Brilliant beyond all of his peers. He had fame and fortune beyond anything that you and I could truly understand.

And he lived his life according to his own agenda. His own skills, his own ability, his own plan, they were his God.

[46 : 29] And do you know what? He was fabulously successful. You have watched him perform and you have been entertained.

Many times. Matter of fact, just about everything that man touched turned to gold. Aladdin, good morning Vietnam.

What is it? The one where he was a doctor, Patch, Patch Adams. Who am I talking about? Was he not fabulously successful?

Was he not incredibly talented beyond most people? did he not commit suicide and depression because he found out that he had a mental illness?

Did not all of his dreams come to a devastating end because he had no God beyond himself? Don't get me wrong.

[47 : 38] Living for the Lord is not easy. Putting Jehovah as number one in your life is not always simple. You may, I'm not going to sugarcoat it, you will suffer for your faith.

It will be hard. You will face rejection. But God God loved us so much that he sent his son to die on a cross.

But God cares about us so much that Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you. God looked at us in this world and loved us so much that he gave us death.

That we can say goodbye to this world and hello to glory. God because apart from that gift we would be stuck in this miserable ball.

But in his great love and great mercy, looking ahead and knowing the beginning from the end, God had a plan for us. A plan of hope, a plan of love, and a plan secure from evil.

[49 : 02] It may mean that you walk hard days today, but I, as Habakkuk, have this conclusion. I will trust God.

And I encourage you to walk in that same trust. Let's pray. Let's pray.