

When God Takes Long

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[0 : 00] Oh Lord, we need your help. We need your help both to speak and to listen.! Lord, not for our glory, but for our enrichment.

! Lord, as we consider these words, help us to be mindful of the period that we are in, and help us, oh Lord, to find application. In the name of Jesus, we pray, and all God's people say, Amen. Here's a truth for all of us. The truth is this, that there are many things that you and I and all of us have in common.

One of those things is that all of us have faced some kind of trouble or the other in our lifetime.

Likely many times, and perhaps even now, some of us are confronting some sort of issue.

[1 : 31] Uncertainty. Difficulty. Feeling of abandonment. Betrayal. Squeezed on all sides. Financial challenges.

Whatever. Been there. Done that. The book that forms the basis for our three-part series, Habakkuk, is about a people, Judea, who were being overwhelmed by a strong army, the Babylonians.

Uncertainty. Undoubtedly, dreams were dashed. Aspirations were put on hold.

Loved ones killed and enslaved. Just total chaos. Things were going in a direction that they could not have anticipated.

In chapter 1, which we considered last week, we found that even though even faithful believers sometimes doubt God's character and question His ways.

[3 : 04] In the midst of challenges, in the midst of difficulties, even God's, even faithful believers sometimes doubt God's character and question His ways.

And we found in chapter 1 that Habakkuk is doubting God's character and questioning His ways.

in verse 1 of chapter 2, we find that Habakkuk was determined to understand what God was doing.

God, what are you doing? All of these challenges that we are confronting with these ungodly people. We ourselves, we are not perfect. We can acknowledge that.

But what's happening here? Why are you permitting those who are much worse than we are to bring judgment on us?

[4 : 17] And in this verse, verse 1 of chapter 2 of Habakkuk, where we ended, Habakkuk said, I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what He, that is the Lord, will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

So here's the picture. Habakkuk sees all of the misery and suffering around him and he says, listen, I'm going to approach God about this. and I'm not going to move until I get an answer.

I'm going to see what He will say to me. And now we come to the remainder of chapter 2 where Habakkuk receives His answer.

The answer the Lord gave to Habakkuk during this period of testing and the answer that He gives to us by extension is this.

The righteous shall live by faith and the wicked shall perish shall The righteous shall live by faith and the wicked shall perish.

[6 : 08] in a moment we're going to read portions of chapter 2 of Habakkuk as we do I would like us to bear in mind that the essence of this chapter after Habakkuk sets out on the nation's problem is as we said that the righteous you and I believers are to live by faith not by the circumstances surrounding us.

In other words God made clear to Habakkuk that his perspective on life the way he ought to view life the way you and I ought to view life and life challenges and circumstances is through a different prism we ought to live we ought to see life's challenges not through the prism of ups and downs and challenges but our perspective must be different from the world's that's what the Lord says to Habakkuk during this difficult period and that's what he says to us when they're going through difficult periods how are you viewing them what is your perspective of the events that are occurring

in your life that would seek to bring you down how are you viewing those events are you viewing them the same way the world is or are you doing it differently let's now read

Habakkuk in sections the first section that we're going to consider for the first portion of our message today verses 2 through 4 forms the basis of our first point which is the righteous shall live by faith these verses chapter 2 Habakkuk verses 2 through 4 forms the basis for our first point the righteous shall live by faith and although this section actually is shorter than the remainder of the chapter this section holds the bulk of what we as believers ought to hold on to and it's where we're going to spend the bulk of our time listen to what

Habakkuk writes in chapter 2 beginning in verse 2 and the Lord answered me write the vision make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it for shall the vision 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 it will not delay behold his soul is puffed up it is not upright within him but the righteous shall live by his faith it is striking that the Lord's response to Habakkuk who is concerned about an invading army is the righteous shall live by faith imagine that an invading army and the

Lord says to him listen the righteous shall live by faith he didn't tell him about some modern armament that he might take up he didn't tell him to gather all of the people all of the men in the city to fight and to war against the Babylonians instead he says to him the righteous shall live by faith and in these verses we see a number of important elements of what was to comprise this faith about which the Lord tells him the first thing we see here in these verses is that it's we see the object of the faith that the Lord speaks about and here we see the Lord says about this faith that it ought to be something that is written which tells me that it was to be specific the

[11 : 41] Lord says write it down do you see that he says write the vision make it plain on tablets so the Lord is what the Lord is doing to Habakkuk now is he saying you are confronting this issue but I'm going to tell you what to do I'm going to tell you what's about to happen and I want you to write it down and your faith is going to be anchored on what I am about to tell you the Lord said to him that it's something that is going to be specific and he said to him further make it plain make it plain make it specific write it down make it plain so that it's understandable so that those who will share it so that those who will share his word can run with it and declare it to the people simple and easily understood to what end was it to be written and to be made plain so that those who heard it may run with it and spread it to others and then we see here a second element of this faith the

Lord says to Habakkuk in summary that you need to persevere in your faith he says you need to endure in your faith here here is how he says it in verse three he says for still the vision awaits its appointed time he says these things that I'm about to tell you they are going to happen within an appointed time and you know if you are like me you know the Lord is still working with me as it relates to patience and the Lord says to him further it hastens to the end it shall not lie this thing that I'm saying to you it's going to happen it's not a lie and then he says if it seems slow wait for it he says to

Habakkuk listen tomorrow and the year after the decade after if you don't see it happening if this invading army is still there know that this word that I am telling you will come to pass you need to persevere is what the Lord says to Habakkuk if it seems slow wait for it that's the message that the Lord would have us to hear this morning as well in so many different areas of our lives seems slow things that we have prayed about things that we have read in the Bible about and we know that they are ours because of what the

Bible says but they don't seem to be happening fast enough or at all the Lord says it hastens to the end it will not lie if it seems slow wait for it it will surely come it will not delay and then there's a third element of this faith that we see in these words of Habakkuk we see a certainty of our faith there is certainty to these words because the one who is the author of these words is God himself there's absolute certainty he not only knows everything he controls everything and the believer's faith faith is not in his faith but the believer's faith is undergirded by

God himself he is the one who brings it to pass he is the one who makes it certain it's not you or me it's not the extent to which we can conjure up and hold on to our faith but rather I'm not you glad about that I know I am I am because you talk about Habakkuk been there done that many times the author of the book of Hebrews tells us in chapter 11 verse 1 that faith is the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen it is faith is the assurance of things hoped for it is the conviction of things not seen not because of who we are but because of who

[17 : 48] God is we must live you and I we live in view of our faith here we see the source the author and the sustainer of our faith!

the Lord delivering this word to Habakkuk we also saw the characteristics of the things that form the basis of our faith in these verses they would not live in fear that's number one so that they would not live in fear they would know that ultimately

God's got this God is in control he is the sovereign one he's the one who knows all things and he's the one who controls all things and secondly I believe that God gave them this vision so that their expectation expectation is not circumstantial your expectation is not based on things that are happening around you rather your expectation is based on the things that God says how many of you realize that if your expectations are based on the things that you see and that you experience you got to be like a yo-yo up and down every single second of every single day because things change things change rapidly how many of us came into 2020 with plans and aspirations and a few days later things change circumstances change there are two additional things

I wish us to consider about this section in Habakkuk verse 4 helps us to see that the righteous must live by faith in God's word God's promises this instance the vision that God gave to Habakkuk there is no other way there is no other way that the righteous can live the Bible teaches us that without faith it is impossible to please God the second point that I want us to see additional point I want us to see is that this truth about the righteous living by faith is an enduring and everlasting reality this did not end with

Habakkuk is the point I'm making it endures it continues to this day we see evidence of this in Romans chapter 1 in verse 17 where the apostle Paul writes the righteous shall live by faith the righteous shall live by faith so we find these words both in the Old and in the New Testament we don't get to live differently our hope and our expectation are anchored in the promises of God and that's why we gotta get to know this we gotta get to know his word got a question for you what about you today what about you today are you living by faith or you allowing the circumstances the challenges of the day to overwhelm you about vision is not only that the righteous will overcome but that the wicked will be judged that brings me to our second and final point to make this point in this chapter the

[23 : 57] Lord pronounces five woes on the Babylonians each one setting up their sin and noting that they will face consequences before we briefly consider these let's remember that this was an invading army this is what you need to hear now about this this is really interesting this was an invading army enjoying the spoils of the land and no doubt it seemed to them and every one who would observe them that they were doing well that they were victorious that they were the top dog as it were yet the people of Judah were being commanded to live in view of the promise that the Babylonians would be brought low even if it took decades for that to happen now you and I gotta admit we gotta admit that that's not an easy position to be in that's not easy how many of you know that

God does not have a short term view that's a challenge if there is one that you and I have and yes it is we have to acknowledge that we have fallen beings that we like things done quickly instantly it's true listen I speak for myself then I like it done right away when I see a problem I like to knock it out right away but we have to acknowledge that most times that's not the way it works let's take a look at what the Lord tells Habakkuk what happened to these this invading army again in verse 6 Lord says shall not all these take up their taunt against him with scoffing and riddles for him and say woe to him it's the first woe woe to him who heaps up what is not his own for how long and loads himself with pledges will not your debtors suddenly arise and those awake who will make you tremble then you will be for them spoiled 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 woe to him who gets evil gain for his house to set his nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm you have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples you have forfeited your life for the stone will cry out from the wall and the beam from the woodwork respond woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds the city on iniquity behold is it not from the lord of hosts that peoples labor merely for fire and nations weary themselves for nothing for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the lord as the waters cover the sea woe to him who makes his neighbors drink you pour out your wrath and make them drunk in order to gaze at their nakedness you will have your fill of shame instead of glory drink yourself and show your uncircumcision the cup in the lord's right hand will come around to you and out of shame will come

upon your glory the violence done to

Lebanon will overwhelm you as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them for the blood of man and violence of the earth to cities and all who dwell in them what prophet is an idol when its maker has shaped it a metal image a teacher of lies for its maker trusts his own creation when he makes speechless idols woe to him who sails to a wooden thing awake to a silent stone arise can this teach behold it is overlaid with gold and silver and there is no breath at all in it but the Lord is in his holy temple that all the earth be silent before him the Lord tells Habakkuk that these people who are invading who

I've who I have allowed to plunder this land that they will be punished and you can write that down and look forward to the day when that happens the Lord says to them woe to them woe to the Babylonians who are conquering cities as it were on loan which would have to be repaid as they conquered all these cities it's as if they are borrowing they're pledging they're borrowing and at some point they're going to have to pay it back and they're going to be embarrassed in the process woe to the Babylonians who are seeking through their conquests to shield themselves through ill gotten wealth in other words the Lord says to them this is what they're trying to do they're trying to amass all of this wealth so that they can build large structures to protect themselves but the Lord says it's not going to work it's not going to be enough it's not enough for us to think that we can amass ill gotten wealth so that we might preserve our future is what the Lord is saying I condemn that woe to them the Babylonians woe to them for their injustice woe to them for the way the manner in which they treat their neighbors neighboring countries woe to the idol worshipers woe to them they are condemned in the end and as we conclude this message today what we see in Habakkuk 2 is not dissimilar from the gospel and the judgment to come as believers we are commanded to live in view of a future promise the return of

[31 : 57] Christ mindful that there is coming a final judgment for those who do not believe that that's our promise that's what we live for the return of Christ and we live in view of that you and I ought to live in view of that God says it but he's going to return for his church and it's been many years since he said it since he said it but you and I are to be as the Lord said to Habakkuk we ought to live by faith and for those who think that they are getting away with murder there is coming a final judgment for them for those who do not believe let us pray

Lord cause our hearts cause our hearts to be quieted even as we encounter things and circumstances that are not desirable cause our faces to set like flint towards the return of your son Jesus Lord we pray that you would open the hearts of those who do not believe even Lord as they think that they're on top of the world open their eyes so that they might see the truth the certainty of death the finality of death and the certainty of a judgment to come

Lord this is our prayer in Jesus name and all God's people say Amen God chewing!
chewing!