

Habakkuk's Song (1)

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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Habakkuk chapter 3. We're only going to cover the first two verses, but I want to read the whole thing because that's going to give you the proper context of his response. Look with me at verse number 1.

A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years.

[1 : 03] In the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy. God came from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah.

His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light. He had horns coming out of his hand and there was the hiding of his power.

Before him went the pestilence and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood 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. I saw the tents of Cushan and affliction and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? Was thine anger against the rivers? Was thy wrath against the sea that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?

[2 : 04] Thy bow was made quite naked according to the oaths of the tribes. Even thy word, Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. 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. Thou didst march through the land in indignation. Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people. Even for salvation with thine anointed. Thou woundest the head out of the house of the wicked by discovering the foundation unto the neck.

Selah. Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages. They came out as a whirlwind to scatter me. Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly.

[3 : 04] Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses through the heap of great waters. Now hear how Habakkuk responds here at the very end. It's unbelievable. When I heard, that is I heard thy speech from verse 2.

When I heard, my belly trembled. My lips quivered at the voice. Rottenness entered into my bones. And I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble.

When he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops. And then he praises the Lord and he says, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines.

The labor of the olives shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls. That's a description of the complete destruction of society.

How will he respond? This is a resolve on Habakkuk's part. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.

[4 : 15] To the chief singer on my stringed instruments. There's quite a difference between the way that this book begins and the way that it ends, isn't there? In the beginning, we see a frustrated prophet.

We see a discouraged prophet, a perplexed prophet, bringing his even accusations to an extent before the holy God. Then God speaks, and the way that we see him responding at the end is, Lord, do whatever you've got to do.

If you have to destroy everything around me, I will trust in you. I will rejoice in you. It's quite a big difference. In the beginning, we see a despairing heart.

In the end, we see a trusting heart. This final chapter of Habakkuk is considered to be a classic poem of Hebrew poetry.

And there's no mistaking, as we just read, the poetic and metaphoric elements of the text as Habakkuk responds to the message of God. But it is foremost a prayer.

[5 : 18] Look with me at verse number one. And very clearly, Habakkuk lays it out at the beginning. This is a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. Without a doubt, we're reminded here that Habakkuk was a praying man.

In fact, this entire book is the dialogue between Habakkuk and his God. This isn't the dialogue between Habakkuk and one of his buddies or with another priest or another prophet, and they're just trying to work through and reason out and solve all the world's problems together.

That is not what this book is. This is a man of God coming before the Lord himself, making his request to the Lord. He's a praying man. The questions that he begins with, he doesn't take to others, he takes to God.

The more perplexing question that he develops, he doesn't take to others, he takes to God. And then when we get to the end, after he hears God answers, what do we see Habakkuk doing once again? Coming once again to the Lord in prayer.

And we see this communion, this relational God that we've already talked about already this morning. We see this man of God enjoying, even in perplexity, communion with God.

[6 : 28] So yes, this is a psalm. It's a poem, but it's foremost a prayer. Before the nation ever proclaimed this psalm in worship, Habakkuk prayed it to God.

This was not written foremost for the people. This was written foremost as Habakkuk praying to the sovereign Lord.

And the Lord used it to speak to his people. And it's well worth our time to stop and take notice of the formal structure of this prayer. Have you ever prayed a prayer like chapter three?

See, I can assure you, I have never prayed a prayer like this. I've never talked about, in my prayer to God, horns coming out of his hands. I've never talked about God riding on the horses on the sea. I've never even pictured that in my mind one time to pray to the Lord in such a poetic way. And I can tell you that Habakkuk didn't just think of this. This was formal.

[7 : 29] It was structured. He took time. It was premeditated. And there's a great lesson in this for us. Most of the time, we consider prayer to be an exclusively extemporaneous act.

That is, we don't have any kind of preparation or any kind of structure or any kind of plan. We enjoy the context of spontaneity when we pray, right? And, of course, if we're going to follow Paul's command in the New Testament to pray without ceasing, spontaneity is going to be the context of most of our prayers.

We may come to church on a Sunday, and you go to Joseph. You say, Joseph, how's things going for you? And he may say, well, you know, it's been a tough week. And he tells you the reasons why it's been a tough week. And you may stop in that moment in spontaneity and pray with Joseph and pray over the needs of his heart.

There's no premeditation to that. There's no plan. There's no structure. Maybe a lot of times your private prayer at home is really structured that way too, where maybe you don't even really have a list. Maybe you just kind of go to the Lord in prayer, and as you think up things to pray, you pray those things to the Lord.

But I do think that there is space, not only in the scriptures but in the Christian life, for us to slow down in our private and even corporate worship for premeditated, structured, thought-through prayers to the Lord.

[8 : 47] Think about that. Habakkuk took time to think through what he's writing. Of course, we understand that to be through the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit. But he took time to think through

each word.

He took time to think through the structure. He has just been confronted by the God of creation, the sovereign God that is holy above all. And he has come to realize in this moment, my sin will be judged too.

He's going to take time to respond. He's not going to respond frivolously in that moment. And he takes time to do that. And really, the scripture is full of prayers like this. You know when you read the book of the Psalms, you know what those are?

They are formal, structured, premeditated prayers. And taking the Psalms and other prayers like Habakkuk's prayer in the scriptures and praying them to the Lord in your private worship will be a great start in this.

Maybe consider sitting down and writing out prayers from time to time. Not exclusively and maybe not even the majority of the time. But at least sometimes sitting down to focus your heart and give all of your attention and expression to writing out your prayers to the Lord.

[9 : 57] And then praying them to God in that moment. But I think there's space for that in the Christian life. Don't let anybody make you feel guilty for reading a prayer to God. We don't recite prayer.

We pray. And there's a difference between praying in vain and actually praying through a thought through meditation of your words to your heavenly Father.

But it's not just a prayer. We find out immediately that it's also a song. Look with me again at verse 1. He says, this is a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigianoth.

Now look at verse 19 at the very end. The very last sentence. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments. Now Shigianoth is believed to be a specific melody or tune.

Maybe you've heard of metrical tunes or metrical psalms. In fact, if you study church history at all and you maybe think back to people like Charles Spurgeon, C.H. Spurgeon, who pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London in the 1800s.

[11 : 02] We understand how they did music, congregational singing. When they produced their hymn books, they didn't have notes in them. There was no music to it. It was just words. And so they would turn to a particular song.

And then they would announce the tune that they were going to sing that song to. And then everybody would lift up their voices and they would sing this song. Shigianoth is one of those tunes. That's what we believe at least. We believe that it's one of those melodies.

So when Habakkuk writes this prayer, he not only prays it to the Lord, but then he writes it and he says, whenever you sing this, I want you to sing it to this tune. But why would he do this? Well, God's people have always been a singing people.

Some believe that Habakkuk was a musician that might have even served in the musical ministry of temple worship. But what's clear is that Habakkuk did not intend for this prayer to be merely read or recited.

He fully intended for it to be sung by the faithful remnant in Israel. And you guys know how much I love music. And you know how much I love congregational music especially.

[12 : 07] So this is just a by the way. Why is it that God's people are a singing people? And what is it that causes music to play such a vital role in the church and in the Christian life?

Let me just mention a few things too. You may want to write them down. The first thing is this. Music is the best medium for committing truth to memory. It's the best medium for committing truth to memory.

You may remember on one hand, even vaguely, how many sermons that you've listened to over the years of your Christian life. Some of you have been saved a long time.

And you probably still, you may not even remember the sermon that we heard last Sunday or a couple weeks ago. And can I just make a confession for just a moment? But whenever we come back to Philipians here in a couple weeks, I'm going to have to review myself a little bit of what I preached up to this point in Philipians.

Because it's been a while. You know why? Because we don't retain knowledge. We don't retain truth the same way in lecture that we do through music. There's a significance to the power of music in this way.

[13 : 10] So when Habakkuk writes this and he says, I want you to set this to Shigianoth and I want you to play it on my stringed instruments. He's saying, I want this to be remembered. And I want

you to commit this to your memory. I want you to commit these things about God to your memory. This is why music in our church, and we take great care in the selection of the songs that we sing. The songs that we sing on a Sunday morning are not chosen randomly. They're not chosen based on exclusively their melody or the way that they make us feel. They're chosen primarily on the doctrine that they preach and that they teach. Because what we need to carry through life is not songs that make us feel good. We need to carry through life songs that remind us of who God is and who we are in relation to him. And we need to carry songs through life that commit the scriptures to our memory and commit the scriptures to our hearts.

So God's people are a singing people. And one of the reasons is, is because it's the greatest medium for committing truth to memory. Habakkuk understood the advantages of this. Secondly, I think music provides a beautiful expression of soul in worship.

[14:13] One of the gifts of music is the gift of good songwriters. Now, as you can tell, I'm not a very poetic person.

We've established that already in this sermon today. And I just, I don't have the ability to express my thoughts and my heart and my worship the way that God has gifted other people to express it. Last week, we introduced that song during our communion time, The King in All His Beauty, which is just such a beautiful song and it's such a great expression of who God is and what Christ has done for us in the gospel.

I could never write that. But when I sing that and when I listen to that song, it gives me personally an expression of worship that I can't write on my own.

And music does that for us. It brings us an expression of worship that we otherwise cannot attain to in our lives. Thirdly, music heightens the emotional experience of worship in ways that are otherwise impossible.

[15:10] I know this is abused and it's exploited in modern Christianity really to a great extent. And that's not what I mean by this. But I do mean that God has created us and created music to affect us in this way.

There's a reason music stirs us and moves us because God created it to stir us and move us. And we're not to prioritize feeling, but we are to lean in to what God has created us to be in emotional and relational beings.

Now think about this. I can read Psalm 23 and be impacted by it. I can sing Psalm 23 and experience a unique expression and emotion of worship that I don't necessarily experience when I just read it.

And depending on the emphasis of that tune and depending on the emphasis of that melody, it will help me focus on a different attribute of that song in a different way. I may sing solemnly at the beginning of that psalm, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

But I may explode in praise at the end of that psalm when I say, surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

[16:23] It's one thing to recite that and read it. It's another thing to express that in worship and beautiful expression to the Lord also. And then fourthly, it encourages focused contemplation.

Three different times in this song, Habakkuk says, Selah. It means stop and think about it. It's a musical notation. And in the music, perhaps they would have even stopped completely and just paused for a moment to reflect on what they had just sung, what they had just heard.

And then the music would pick back up and maybe even change its tempo or change its mood in one way or another. And they would begin to sing the remainder of the song. Music does that. The prayer song of chapter three provides a structure for how we should respond to God in troubling seasons of life.

And how we should approach him with our perplexities. In this chapter, we see Habakkuk react to the word of God. We see him rehearse the mighty acts of God.

And then we see him resolve to rejoice in the person of God. You need to worry about the last two. We won't get to them today. We're just going to talk about his reaction to the word of God.

[17:33] And let's do that now. Look with me at verse number two. Habakkuk prays, 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. If we were to compare the various prayers that Habakkuk prayed throughout this book, we would quickly see a shift in the

attitude and tone of this final prayer song.

His first prayer, as we mentioned, was a question of what seemed to be God's inaction. And his second prayer was a question of God's methods. And while it's not necessary for us to condemn him in that, there is without a doubt a positive change that takes place when we get to his prayer in chapter three.

James Boyce says something happened in the interval between the prayers of the first chapter and the prayer of the third. And it changed Habakkuk. Quite simply, Boyce says, Habakkuk had taken his mind off of himself, the Israelites and the Babylonians, and had focused on God.

Well, what's really the difference in these prayers? In chapter one, we see his perplexing prayers. We see his questioning God. We see him questioning God's methods. And then in chapter three, we see him praising God.

[18:55] And we see him rejoicing in the Lord despite his circumstances. What's the difference? Where is the interval? It's chapter two. And what's in chapter two? Nothing from Habakkuk.

When we get to the end of his second question, what's he doing? He says, I will sit upon my high tower. I'm going to be quiet. And I'm going to watch. And I'm going to wait to see how the Lord will answer me in this moment.

And then all of chapter two is God's answer. What made the difference between Habakkuk's prayers in chapter one and Habakkuk's prayer in chapter three? It was the word of God that made the difference.

In chapter one, he wasn't considering the words of God. In chapter one, he was only considering his own perspective and his own circumstance. But when he gets to chapter three, he's been confronted by the very words of God.

And once being confronted by the very words of God, it has completely changed his tone. It's changed his attitude. It's changed his perspective of everything that he's doing. Look with me at that first phrase.

[19:49] Oh, Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid, he says. The root of the change is seen in this opening phrase.

I have heard thy speech. A dramatic shift has taken place in which the eyes of the prophet have been lifted off of his circumstance and have instead been focused on his God.

And the cause of this shift is the Bible, the word of God, the scriptures, what God had delivered him in this message. And once again, we are confronted by the fact that it is the Bible that God uses to affect our heart and our will.

It wasn't some kind of epiphany that Habakkuk had finally come to and things had just clicked and made sense in his mind. It wasn't that at all. It wasn't this psychological evaluation where he just decided to pull himself up by his bootstraps and just press forward despite his confusion.

It wasn't that at all. It was the very words of God that impacted his heart. It was the very spirit of God that affected and energized his will and energized his thoughts in this moment.

[21:02] The Bible is God's speech. Everything that we have in the scriptures that you hold in your hand today, this is verbally spoken by God. That's what we believe.

Paul wrote to Timothy that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and it's profitable for us. That word inspiration means breathed out. God breathed out. We believe in the verbal speaking of God in delivering his word.

When we see these words, we trust them because we believe them to be the very words of God.

What impacted Habakkuk in that moment was the very words of God. What will impact you and impact you and your perplexities and what will change your tone and attitude despite your misunderstandings and your incomplete understanding will only be the word of God.

So dive into the word of God. So already we've seen that what made the difference for Habakkuk was prayer and scripture. Prayer and scripture.

Prayer is our way of communing with God. Scripture is God's way of communing with us. And the problem with many Christians is they don't pray. So when they don't pray, there's already half of this relationship that's being ignored.

[22:10] And the other problem is many Christians don't read their Bible either. So if you're not praying and you're not reading your Bible, there is literally nothing there to substantiate your communion with God.

There's no way for him to speak to you. There's no way for you to speak to him. And of course, if we neglect prayer and scripture, we will live in perplexity. We will live in confusion. Our minds always focused on us, always focused on our circumstance, never with our eyes lifted up to the holy God, never in worship, always on us.

And it was the word of God that made this difference. It's why we're called Lakeside Bible Church because it's the Bible that will make the difference. It's why we read scripture through our services. It's why we put a focus on the preaching of the word in our services and not on other things. It's why we care that our music is infused with scripture because it is the word of God that is used by the spirit of God to affect our wills and our behavior and our minds and our thoughts.

What was the specific work that God did in Habakkuk's heart? The prophet tells us at the end of that phrase, he says, I was afraid. I fear.

[23 : 22] I do fear. Why did he fear? At the beginning of this chapter or at the beginning of this book, Habakkuk's eyes are focused solely on himself and on the nation and on the Chaldeans.

He's looking at everything from his own perspective. And the reason he's confused about the way God was judging Israel is because he kept comparing Israel's wickedness or what he perceived to be Israel's righteousness with the wickedness of the Chaldeans.

So long as he was only looking at it from man's perspective, it would never make sense to him that God was judging Israel in this way. And so long as we're living our lives in comparison with everybody else, it's never going to make sense why God works in the way that he does.

It's never going to make sense why the wicked prosper and why the righteous are reproved. It will never make sense so long as our eyes are focused on ourselves. But when we get to chapter 2, what happens?

The focus is taken off of Israel. The focus is taken off of Habakkuk. The focus is taken off of the Chaldeans. And it's focused solely on the holiness of God. And God says, everyone will be judged, Habakkuk.

[24 : 25] At the end of this, it doesn't matter how it turns out right now. At the end of this, every sin will be judged. Every sin will be judged. And you will be no exception.

I am the holy God. Stand in silence before me. And that's exactly what Habakkuk does. He's humbled. He sees God.

And when he sees God, he sees himself in relation to God. And it humbles him. And he begins to fear this reverential fear that believers are to live in light of. Why?

Because he saw God. When we lose sight of who God is, we inevitably lose sight of who we are in relation to him.

And what we end up doing then is playing the comparison game. We say, well, I deserve more than this. Why does this person get that when they do this?

[25 : 24] If you remember back in chapter 1 during this second question in verse 13, Habakkuk says, Habakkuk says, Why do you look treacherously upon us? Why do you hold your tongue when the wicked devours the man more righteous than he?

Habakkuk's still looking at Israel as righteous. But he's got the wrong perspective. It wasn't that God was using a more wicked people to judge a righteous people.

He was using a more wicked people to judge a less wicked people. And they were all ultimately going to be judged. Which is what makes verse 4 of chapter 2 so important. All sin will be judged. Only those who live by faith will be justified. Then we say, look at the next phrase. Revive thy work in the midst of the years.

In the midst of the years, make it known. Habakkuk prays. The entire chapter of 3, this is the only petition in this whole prayer that Habakkuk makes.

[26 : 25] That's pretty amazing. 19 verses we read that make up this prayer and this psalm and this song. And there's only half of one verse that actually includes Habakkuk asking for something.

But what's significant about this petition is what he didn't ask for. Notice with me again in verse 2. What do you notice missing from that petition?

Habakkuk didn't ask for God to change his mind. He didn't ask for God to not judge Israel. He didn't ask for God to prevent the Babylonians from sacking the city of Jerusalem.

He didn't ask God to do anything. He didn't ask God to change his mind. He didn't ask him to change his judgment. He understood that God's judgment must be poured out on sin.

God had spoken and he was submissive to that. So what did he ask for? He asked that God's work would be accomplished. That God's glory would be known.

[27 : 27] He took the focus off of what he wanted. He took the focus off of his own comforts. He took the focus off of his own desires for the nation. And he essentially says, Lord, if this is what you've got to do to accomplish your work, if this is what you've got to do to accomplish your purposes, then do it.

And I wonder how many times we have gone through difficulties in life and we've observed the chaos of the world around us. And how many of our prayers, in addition to asking for God to do something about the wickedness, how much of that has come from a heart of, Lord, I just want your glory to be known.

And I just want your power to be demonstrated. And I just want your purposes to be accomplished. Even if it costs me everything, Lord, I want your work to be done. I can tell you very few times I've prayed a prayer like that.

Why? Because my prayer is consumed with me. What I want and what I desire. And of course, the Lord wants us to cast our care upon him for he cares for us and we can't forget that either. But the focus of Habakkuk's prayer is, Lord, revive your work.

Whatever you've got to do, Lord, do it. His one desire was that things would be right according to God's plan, not comfortable according to his desires. And we have to ask ourselves the question, what's the preeminent focus of our life?

[28 : 45] What is it truly that concerns you the most? What have you taken on as the crusade of your life, the thing that you're fighting for, the thing that you are most passionate about in your life?

Some of us, the greatest passion that we have is a political passion. Maybe we're concerned about the socialism that seems to be creeping its way into America. And how many of us in that moment realize that you can take the socialism out of a man and all you have is a man without socialism? But you give a man Jesus and you change his eternity through the power of God. Everything in his life has been changed. Everything in his eternity has changed. Sure, let's make statements for right and let's make statements for justice.

And let's do whatever we've got to do to make sure that righteousness prevails, at least according to our lives. But let's do that secondary to whatever it is that God desires to do.

Let's focus on the kingdom of God first. What's your biggest concern in life? Some of us are concerned about this virus. Everybody seems to have forgotten about it this week.

[29 : 46] But it's real. And it's legitimate. And some people are getting, I've got a pastor friend in Georgia that the Cheeks know. He's been in the hospital for like two weeks now.

Like he's very close to dying. A man who otherwise before this was in perfect health, had no health issues, no underlying conditions as far as I think that they understood up to that point.

And he's been on a ventilator for two weeks fighting for it. This is a real virus that's really affecting people in real ways. And some of us are really concerned about that. And that's fine.

You need to be. Pray for God's protection. Pray for God to do this. But pray first for God's will to be done. For his glory to be known. We're concerned about these riots and the destruction.

Pray about that. But pray first that. Have you ever considered that everything that's happening around us is being orchestrated by God to accomplish his purpose? And you know one of the things I think is his purpose right now? I think he is waking up his church right now.

[30 : 47] That we will understand that our motivation in this life is not to build a great life for us. Our motivation in this life is to preach the gospel of Christ. And if God's church would just wake up and focus on that truth, we would be able to approach our society a completely different viewpoint.

Instead of fighting with people on Facebook, we'll be fighting with people about the gospel.

Preaching the gospel truth. The only thing that can actually change people's lives. What's your focus?

Habakkuk's focus changed here. And he said, revive your work, Lord. It takes loss to understand the value of gain. And it is hardship that so often helps us to see the blessing of everyday graces. Revivals often come in the midst of terrible times. And they're often sparked by a few faithful Christians that are willing to lay everything on the line for the work and glory of God.

Think about what Habakkuk was saying when he prayed, revive your work, Lord. Here's what he was saying. He was submitting to losing his home. He was submitting to losing his freedom.

[31 : 58] He was submitting to losing his family and his friends. He was submitting to losing his free right to worship. He was losing his country.

He was losing even his own life. But he still prayed, Lord, whatever you've got to do, do it. God's work in this earth is not the American dream.

It's the salvation of souls. So pray for the kingdom of God. And then finally, and we'll finish. Look at this last phrase. In wrath, remember mercy.

In wrath, remember mercy. This is the theme of all the Bible. God must judge sin, but he has provided a savior that has taken our judgment.

Truly in justice, he has provided mercy. And this is the great work that Habakkuk is praying for God to revive. Consistent throughout this book is this truth.

[33 : 06] There's the covenant of God, the eternal covenant, that God's wrath will be poured out against sin, but that he has made a provision for mercy to all that love and follow him. Not on the basis of who they are or on the basis of what they do, but on the basis of their faith in his finished work at Calvary as we understand it now.

So he's acknowledging the fact here. He's not asking God to remember mercy as if he's forgotten it. He's acknowledging that equal to God's attribute of justice is God's attribute of mercy and salvation and forgiveness.

In fact, justice and mercy, they never work in isolation. They always work together. Anytime you see justice, what will you see with it?

God's mercy. Anytime you see God's wrath, you will also see the salvation of God. And God certainly did show mercy in this situation. Yes, the wicked were destroyed in Israel, but God saved a remnant of the people that became his witnesses in Babylon, that he brought back 70 years later, that he preserved the Davidic bloodline in order that he might fulfill the prophecy, that through the throne of David, there would be a seat of David that would sit eternally on the throne, the person of Jesus Christ.

Yes, he did show mercy. They had difficulty, but God showed his mercy. Can I tell you what the whole Bible is about? Can I sum it up for you just in one phrase?

[34 : 32] God's salvation of his people. God's salvation of his people. Julie and I were talking yesterday. I know I got to finish, but Julie and I were talking yesterday about how often we lose sight of that fact when we study various portions of scripture.

Think about the story of David and Goliath. How many times have we heard a sermon on David and Goliath that has focused on applying our life to David? You remember the story.

You know what's happening in 1 Samuel there. That Israel is encamped on the hillside of the valley of Elah and they're trembling. They're at war with the armies of Philistia and they're trembling.

The battle has stopped. And every day the Philistines are sending out a champion, a 10-foot tall giant named Goliath who was mocking God and mocking Israel. And he said, if you'll send one champion out to fight me, whoever loses will have to serve the other country.

That was basically what he was saying and he was mocking God in the process. Well, Israel didn't have a champion. They didn't have anybody to fight for them, anybody willing. And here comes David, teenage boy, there on a humanitarian effort to bring some food to his brothers.

[35 : 40] He sees Goliath, he hears what's going on, he goes, and you know the story, you know how it goes. He ends up going and fighting Goliath. He can't wear any armor. He has no sword. He certainly didn't have a pistol.

All he has is a sling and a handful of stones. And he puts one in the sling and he slings it around, hits Goliath right in the head. Goliath is killed. Philistia runs. We understand the story.

How many times have we heard a sermon that says, these giants in your life, these giants of sin and these giants of depression and these giants of poverty and these giants of all of these things.

If you will just be like David and you'll just be faithful, you'll be able to get victory over these giants. But that's not what that story is about at all. You are not David. Neither am I.

You know who we are in that story? We're Israel. We're the ones on the hill, shaking in our boots because we see the Goliath coming out day by day, fighting against us.

[36 : 35] And we know we're incapable of fighting that giant. There is nothing in us that can fight that giant. There is no way that we can champion our own cause in this moment. So we stay on the hillside of the Valley of Elah and we shake in our boots.

But God sends a champion on our behalf. David is Jesus. And Jesus comes and he fights that giant of death and that giant of sin and that giant of depression and all the other giants of our life that we can't fight against.

Christ fights for us as the perfect fulfillment of what David represented in 1 Samuel. You're not David. Jesus is David. In everything that we read in the Bible, the whole story is about God's salvation of his people from his own wrath.

And he has ultimately poured out that wrath on his own son. That's where it finds its ultimate fulfillment. Mercy and justice meet together once again on Calvary. Except this time God's wrath isn't being poured out on wicked men.

God's wrath is being poured out on his perfectly sinless son. And justice is served on the son of God in order that we who actually deserve that justice can actually obtain God's mercy.

[37 : 48] Mercy. And we read in 1 Corinthians, God hath made him to be sin who knew no sin that in him we might have the righteousness of Christ. That's the story of the Bible.

God will judge sin and he will judge every sin. But he has made a provision for mercy. And just as much as he will pour out wrath against sin, he has poured it out on Christ for all that will come to him in faith.

And for all that will believe in him. That's why every Sunday when we come to this place to worship, wherever we worship, this message of the gospel will be preached.

And that's my commitment to you. And if there's ever a day that I stop doing it, Marty, you remove me out of the way and you put somebody else here in my place. When you invite somebody to come to church as a friend on Sunday and you've been praying for them to get saved and they come and all they hear is 10 tips on how you can be a better mother, that's not going to help them. I want you to know that when you bring somebody to church with you on Sunday that they're going to in some way, shape, or form hear the gospel preached from whatever passage that we're studying in the Bible. Because the Bible is about just that, God's redemptive plan of mankind.

[38 : 58] And so we have to ask every Sunday. And even if there's no guest, I'll ask you every Sunday. Have you truly trusted him? Have you truly been confronted by the holy God that Habakkuk was confronted by?

Or are you still hoping that because your sin isn't as bad as everybody else's sin that God's going to give you a pass? But it won't work that way.

God was going to judge Habakkuk's sin just like he was going to judge Nebuchadnezzar's sin. The only thing that would cause him to be justified before God was his faith. And the only thing that will cause us to stand justified before God at the end of this life will be our faith in Christ Jesus.

For those of us that have trusted him, the desire of our heart now should be the desire of Habakkuk's heart. Lord, whatever you got to do, I just want you, I want your work to be done in my life.

I want your work to be done in this world. I want my life to be consumed with gospel purposes just like Habakkuk's life was consumed at this point with gospel purposes. I want to pray like Jesus.

[40 : 09] Lord, not my will, your will be done. Jesus is the ultimate example of that. He cared more about the will of the Father and the salvation of mankind than he did his own comfort and his own desires as a man, as a human in that place.

Can you say that that's your one desire? I want him to be glorified in my life. I want him to be glorified in my church.

I want him to be glorified in my family, whatever he's got to do to make that happen. I want the Lord to do his work because I care more about his work than my comfort. I care more about his work than I care about my freedoms. And I care more about his work than I care about anything else that I've got going on in my life.

I love him first because as we said earlier, that's the greatest commandment in the scriptures that we would love God with our heart, our soul, our mind, and our strength. And the problem with a lot of Christians is that they don't love God.

At least not enough. We've idolized all the things that we want. But Habakkuk prays, Lord, I've heard your speech. I've seen you because he spent time in the word.

[41 : 16] And as he spent time in the word, as he heard the message of God delivered to him, he said, I fear before you and I just want your work to be done. And as you're accomplishing that work of justice, Lord, remember mercy and show your salvation on man.

Let's bow for prayer. Thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church. Feel free to share it wherever you'd like. Please do not charge for it or alter it in any way without express written consent from Lakeside Bible Church.

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