

The Just shall live by his Faith

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our services today.

We are thankful to the Lord that through this form of technology that we can come together today to share the Gospel. Let us commence our worship by joining together in prayer.

Eternal and ever-blessed Lord, our Heavenly Father, we give Thee thanks that we have access into Thy known nearer presence, that we can enter into the very throne room of God, and that we can come there with boldness and with confidence, seeking Thy mercy and Thy grace to help us in our time of need.

And we acknowledge, O Lord, that we haven't got that boldness and confidence because of any merits of our own, but that we can come through the merits of Thy Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give Thee thanks for His finished work and for His continual ministry at Thine own right hand in the intercession that He makes for us, for those given to Him by Thee in the covenant of redemption, those whom He has redeemed with His own precious blood.

[1 : 45] We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for all the tokens of Thy goodness and kindness that Thou doth so abundantly outpour upon us every day.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, that we can come and lay our petitions before Thee, knowing that Thou art the one who is able to meet with each one of us at our point of need.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for the gift of Thy Son, He who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that He is now crowned with glory and with honour, that He who once offered to bear the sins of many, that to those that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin into salvation.

O, we give Thee thanks for that great promise that Thou hast given to Thy Church, that He shall return. He shall return not to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, but to engather His own and to bring them to be with Him in the inheritance that He has prepared for them.

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for all the promises of Thy known Word, and we give Thee thanks that they have been sealed for us through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

[3 : 26] We ask, O Lord, that in these days that Thou would grant to us wisdom and guidance on the way that we should go forward. We pray, O Lord, for our healthcare workers and all key workers who are putting themselves at risk of infection in order to maintain lifeline services to others.

We pray, O Lord, that Thou would speak near to them. We pray, O Lord, that Thou would protect our community and those who are most vulnerable at this time.

We pray, O Lord, that for those who have been affected with the virus, that they would be, that Thou would draw near to them, that they may know Thine own presence with them, that Thou would meet with them at their point of need.

Grant to us, O Lord, that as a nation and individuals, that we would bow ourselves before Thee, that we would humble ourselves before Thee and acknowledge our sinnership.

O grant to us, O Lord, the grace of repentance, that we would come and sorrow over our sin, that we would put ourselves into the very dust of the earth, acknowledging, O Lord, that we have sinned against Thee, that we have not done in accordance to Thine own word, but that we have each gone our own way.

[5 : 05] Return us, O Lord, into Thine own paths. Grant to us, O Lord, Thine own mercy. Grant to us, O Lord, Thine own lovingkindnesses.

We know that we are not worthy, for if Thou shouldst mark our sins against us, Thy word proclaims to us loudly that there is none that could stand.

But we give Thee thanks that with Thee there is mercy, and that Thou art the one who delighteth in mercy. And so we come before Thee, O Lord, seeking that mercy this day, seeking Thine own goodness and lovingkindness and Thy favour to be upon us as a nation, as islands, as a community, as individuals.

O Lord, may we know truly Thine own favour in these days. We ask, O Lord, that Thou would bless Thy word to us today and our meditation upon Thy word.

Open our hearts, we pray Thee, to receive it, because we acknowledge that we are dependent upon Thine own spirit. to open our hearts, to lay Thy word into our hearts, that it may be lodged there and that it may bring forth evidence in our own lives to the glory and honour of Thy known name.

[6 : 40] We ask, O Lord, that Thou would help us in these days and days of isolation and days of restrictions. We pray, O Lord, that we would enter into the inner chamber with Thyself, that it would be a time of refreshing and blessing to us.

For we give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, that Thou art the one who can come into our circumstances and situations that Thou knowest, O Lord, better than anyone else.

And Thou art the one who is able to come and bring comfort and peace into those circumstances and situations. We ask Thy blessing, O Lord, upon those who are lonely, upon the elderly.

We pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst draw near to them. Remember those who are sick. Remember, we pray, O Lord, those who haven't got the privileges and advantages that we have.

We pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst be near to them, blessing them and showing them mercy and grace. We ask, O Lord, that Thou would be with our young people.

[8 : 01] We pray, O Lord, that out of the circumstances with which we are confronted at this time, that it would draw their minds to think of their own relationship with God.

And we pray, O Lord, that it may indeed turn out to be a time of great blessing among the people. We ask, O Lord, that Thou would continue with us.

Forgive us for all our sins. And all that we ask is in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen. We shall now read the Word of God from the Old Testament, from the prophecy of Habakkuk.

And we shall read chapter 1 down to chapter 2, verse 4. That is, the book of Habakkuk, chapter 1.

The burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see. O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear, even cry unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save?

[9 : 12] Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? For spoiling and violence are before me, and there are that rays of strife and contention.

Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth. For the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

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.

And 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. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves.

[10 : 14] And their horses shall spread themselves, and their horses shall come from far, they shall fly as the eagle that hasteneth to eat. They shall come up all for violence, their faces shall sap up at the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.

And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall bear shorn 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 that this is power unto his God.

Are thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine own Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment, and O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cast not look on iniquity. Fair for lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth a man that is more righteous than he.

And make us 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, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag.

[11 : 38] Therefore they rejoice in our glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.

Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations? I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

And the Lord answered me, and said, Write this 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 is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith.

And so on, may the Lord bless unto us the reading of that portion of his holy word. Now, seeking the Lord's blessing, let us turn back to Habakkuk chapter 2, and we shall read verse 4.

[12 : 57] Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith. Now, our meditation today, and seeking the Lord's blessing upon it, will be the last part of verse 4.

But the just shall live by his faith. Now, I would like to look at the context in which these words were spoken.

Habakkuk belongs to the section that we commonly call the minor prophets.

That is in distinction from the major prophets. Although they are called minor prophets, it doesn't mean that they are less significant or that their message is less important than the other prophets.

All it means simply is that their prophecy is brief compared to the major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

[14 : 08] What do we know about this man, Habakkuk? The truth is, very little. There is no mention of his father or his origins.

All we know is his name and that he was a prophet. Therefore, he must have been resident in Jerusalem. No material is provided and his name is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

However, his name means to embrace or to cling or to grasp or to wrestle. And he is given a very fitting name because spiritually that is what he was.

An embracer of God and a wrestler with God. Unlike many of the prophets, Habakkuk does not locate his ministry in the reign of a king or kings of Judah.

Although the words of verses 5 and 6 in the first chapter would lead us to the conclusion that he ministered in the years leading up to the invasion of Judah by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

[15 : 29] For there we read, 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.

For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that is, the Babylonians, that bitter and hasty nation which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs.

Therefore, he would have been a contemporary of the prophets Jeremiah, Sephaniah and Nahum, so that their prophecies would have overlapped.

I think it is safe for us to place the prophecy of Habakkuk close to the end of the reign of King Josiah and during the reign of his son Jehoiakim, who was a godless king, who was totally different to his father Josiah.

Josiah was a godly man, a godly king, and had brought some spiritual reformation into Judah. But the reformation, the benefit effects of Josiah's reign were no longer to be seen.

[16 : 50] The book of Habakkuk is also unique in this sense that the prophet in the first place addresses God rather than the people. We do not find the prophet addressing the people and warning them of the consequences of their sin and pointing them to the promises of God if they were faithful and obedient to him.

Instead, we find him holding a dialogue with God. He's having a personal dialogue with God over a personal problem that he is struggling with in his walk with God.

He is appealing to God for answers to help him with his struggles. And the reason for this is that he was in his own mind going through a crisis because he was utterly confused and perplexed by the behaviour that he witnessed around him, by the wickedness that was so prevalent in Judah and the fact that God did not intervene.

He struggled to understand and harmonise his knowledge of the goodness and righteousness of God with the evil so prevalent in his own community.

He had no doubt that the Lord of heaven and earth was almighty, that the Lord was just and that the Lord was holy. But why didn't God intervene into the situation that was unfolding before his eyes?

[18 : 34] Why did God allow this to happen? So much wickedness to arise in the nation.

He was anxious to reconcile what he saw with what he believed. Now this was nothing new. Many before him and many since and down to our own day have gone through the same struggle.

Why doesn't God do something? Why does he allow these things to happen? Why does God permit the wicked to triumph? Is he not the almighty?

Does he not have the authority, the right and the power to resolve bad situations? Does God care? These questions raised here by Habakkuk have not gone away by the passing of years.

And the whole situation had become a burden for Habakkuk. The burden which Habakkuk, the prophet, did see.

[19 : 47] Habakkuk is in heaviness and maybe this is a test for ourselves today to see where we are spiritually. How concerned are we for the kingdom of God?

How burdened are we when our nation and communities plunge ever further away from the standards of God's word? How concerned are we when we see the dominance of evil?

How burdened are we not only for those outside the church but for the church itself? Remember Habakkuk's burden and concern were to do with the church, with the covenant people of God.

The problem was that the covenant people of God were not living their lives in accordance to what they were professing to be, the covenant people of God.

What did Habakkuk do with this burden? He came and took his burden to the Lord. There would be no better place to take one's burden than to the Lord.

[20 : 56] Aren't we exhorted in Psalm 55? Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee. But the problem for Habakkuk was when he took his burden to the Lord that the Lord was silent.

It was as if the Lord was not listening. Habakkuk was not the first and will not be the last to ask, O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear?

The words how long emphasises that this is not a situation that has recently arisen, but it is a situation of long standing.

Habakkuk posed out his complaint to God. He has prayed frequently about the situation and called upon God, but there is no answer.

And he is bewildered by the mystery of unpunished evil in the nation. And he cannot understand why the Lord allows such moral and spiritual wickedness to go on.

[22 : 14] The situation was abysmal among the covenant people of God. O Lord, how long shall I cry? And thou wilt not hear even cry 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 they are they that raise up strife and contention.

Therefore, the law slacked and judgment doth never go forth. For the wicked doth compass about the righteous. Therefore, wrong judgment proceedeth.

Judah was on the brink of a devastating crisis. Violence and social decay was the norm of the day. and the law was paralysed and evil was on the ascendancy.

Judah's beset by oppression and violence on every side and the word of God was powerless. The writer to the Hebrew tells us regarding the word of God that it is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and as a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

[23 : 44] Can the word of God be living and powerful and yet be powerless at the same time? Is that not a contradiction? Well, the word of God is always living and powerful.

That never changes. but it can be paralysed or powerless in the sense of its effects upon the people. And that is the situation that Habakkuk is facing.

The word of God and its effects upon the people is powerless or paralysed. And this is the covenant people of God.

the word of God is having no effect among them. You see, when we take the word of God from its central place, whether in our preaching or in our life, in our communities or in our nation, it is always replaced by social decay, by violence and so on.

we should never underestimate the value that we ought to put upon the word of God being central in our life as a people, as a nation, as a community, as a church and as individuals.

[25 : 09] But Habakkuk's burden here is intensified by the fact that the Lord has been silent. Why is the Lord silent?

How can we reconcile a good God with an evil world? How can we reconcile a good God with wickedness of the world? This is a great problem for a person who believes the Bible.

But Habakkuk was a man of faith and his cry was an act of faith. O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear?

He is using here the covenant name for God. O Yahweh, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear?

O Jehovah, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear? He is coming with boldness and confidence to God based upon the covenant relationship that he has with God.

[26 : 24] And dear friends, that is what gives me and you boldness and confidence to come to God because of the covenant relationship that we have with God.

God. Habakkuk is not coming as one who wants to reach a verdict on God's course of action, but rather he acknowledges the sovereignty of the Lord and the justice of the Lord and the justice of what he does.

A word of pure eyes and to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity. Habakkuk is sure of the sovereignty and righteousness of God and of his covenant commitment to his people.

For that Habakkuk has no doubt. But he is bewildered that he cannot work out what is happening and why.

Here we have an instance of faith seeking understanding. And what was worrying Habakkuk is what is causing anxiety to so many people today.

[27 : 45] Why does God permit certain things to happen? How long can we ignore God and walk in our own way? the church and the condition in which we find it today.

How long? When society plunges ever further away from the standards of God's word and the witness of the church is ineffective to stop it.

Oh Lord, how long? The whole fabric of society is twisted because of the behaviour which continues unchecked.

Oh Lord, how long? Evil is rampant in the world and it goes unchecked. Oh Lord, how long? Habakkuk is a great example for us that although he was perplexed and confused at what was happening and although his prayers had not been answered he kept on coming to God because he knew that the answer to what was happening in his day could only come from him and that is through right down through the ages to the very present day if we want an answer to what is happening in our own day we know that that can only come from the Lord God and to the Lord we must continually go and seek understanding of what is happening in our own day as it was through in the days of

Habakkuk so it is through down through the ages to the present day that the answer can only come from God when we don't see anything happening at least from our perception and answer to our prayers the hardest thing to do is to persevere in prayer when you pray for revival and conversions and you don't see anything happening instead you see the church in decline the number attending church in decline you see apathy and indifference gaining ground a coolness and lack of love among the covenant people of God the church becoming not relevant anymore in our communities and sadly in the life of so many of those who profess to be covenant children you know the difficulty of perseverance in prayer on such occasions but here

[30 : 34] Habakkuk can be a great example for us because he kept coming to God with his petitions and when the Lord does respond to Habakkuk's prayers it is not what he expected or wanted to hear the Lord does not explain to Habakkuk why he had not previously intervened in the situation of injustice and corruption that existed in Judah but he does assert that as one who is sovereign and in control of all the affairs on earth he is going to intervene in the near future he says to Habakkuk 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 for lo I will raise up the

Chaldeans that bitter and hasty nation which shall march to the breadth of the land to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs the Lord's intervention is going to occur in such a way as to cause dismay to Habakkuk and to those that are with him I am going to intervene and I am going to work in your days a work that you will not believe though it be told you the Lord's intervention is going to occur this wasn't the answer Habakkuk was expecting he was hoping God would send a revival to his people oh how the words of Psalm 65 ring true by terrible things and righteousness will thou answer us oh

God of our salvation now if we pause here for a moment and consider that Judah and Jerusalem had been warned many times by the Lord through the prophets for example through the prophet Jeremiah the Lord had said to Jerusalem be thou instructed o Jerusalem lest my soul depart from thee lest I make thee desolate a land not inhabited the Lord here exhorts Jerusalem to take instructions as he says to me and you today to take instruction and where do we find his instruction his instruction is in his word the trouble with Jerusalem was that ears and heart were closed to the word of God all the false prophets made the people of God to doubt that

God judges sin or even that he rules in history they have belied the Lord and said it is not he neither shall evil come upon us neither shall we see sword nor famine and the prophets shall become wind and the word is not in them complete defiance to the word of God are things any different today how many people in our villages in our towns and cities will not receive instruction though the word of God is with them we have this great privilege of having the word of God and yet how many will not receive instruction through the word of God but openly show defiance to the word to the word of God's chastisement and to the word of

God's judgment well that is what was happening in the days of Habakkuk and he prays and he asks oh Lord how long and the Lord gives us response we are not told how long he had been petitioning the Lord but that it was over a period of time and what the Lord revealed to him was unexpected this was not the kind of response that Habakkuk expected in his response the Lord was teaching Habakkuk that he was in control of all that takes place throughout the earth including Judah and that he is going to work through the agency of the ruthless and dreaded Babylonians whose character and conduct are chillingly described for us in verse 7 to 11 the Lord says about them they are terrible and dreadful their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves their horses 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 afar they shall fly as the eagle that hasteneth to eat they shall come all for violence their faces shall sup up as the east wind and they shall gather the captivity as the sand and they shall scoff at the kings and the princes shall be a scorn unto them they they they they they shall they hide 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

[36 : 25] God and the fact to note this is that the Lord raised the Chaldeans or the Babylonians very quickly they came to power very quickly and they were a ferocious people all by terrible things he is going to answer the prayer of Habakkuk the Lord instructs Habakkuk and those like-minded to look behold ye God's words are directed to a larger audience than just the prophet it is words that I directed to me and you today oh they thought that God was doing nothing but here the Lord directs them to behold closely to see what he is doing on the international scene how he's raising up this powerful set of people called the

Chaldeans or the Babylonians the Lord's response ring with surprise and amazement wonder marvelously he said to Habakkuk their expectation was that the complaint would be answered by by a promise of deliverance but here deliverance come in the form of the Babylonian army this is a reminder to me and you that when the Lord dance he does not conform to human expectations of what should happen next oh the word tells us who hath directed the spirit of the Lord or been his counselor hath taught him with whom took he counsel and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge and showed to him the way of understanding behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance oh so often when we pray we make this great mistake of dictating or ascribing to the

Lord the way we want him to answer but here the Lord is saying to Habakkuk I am going to answer your prayers but not in the way that you expected the false prophets teach and the people believe not the false prophets teach rather and the people believe neither shall evil come upon us neither shall we see sword not famine and the prophets shall become wind that is the true prophets shall become wind and the word is not in them but the Lord is saying to Habakkuk the consensus in any society can be utterly and amazingly overturned by divine action the people showed complete defiance to the word

God today today those who show defiance to the word of God those who show defiance to God those who show defiance to the preaching of the gospel when the consensus may be that there is no God when the consensus may be that the preaching of the gospel is in vain when the consensus may be that those who embrace the gospel is weak but my dear friend the consensus in any society can be utterly and amazingly overturned by divine action and the Lord can work very quickly to bring a crisis into our lives and into society in a way not even thought upon the

Lord is saying to Habakkuk I will come the Lord is saying to Habakkuk I will intervene however God's response only provided another problem for Habakkuk he is puzzled and wrestling with the problem of God's providence by the thought that the wicked Babylonians would ruthlessly ravage Judah and Jerusalem how can God who is holy and righteous use such people as the Babylonians to punish his own covenant people how can God who is holy and righteous use such people as the Babylonians to chastise his own covenant people and as he struggles with God's response he is reminding himself of certain things that are true about

[42 : 36] God art thou not from everlasting O Lord my God mine holy one although Habakkuk is puzzled by God's providence towards his covenant people he still does not allow that to undermine his faith in God Habakkuk claims that in terms of the covenant relationship between himself and God that he is my God my holy one and God will not turn us back on his covenant commitment to his own we will not die the Lord who has promised life to his people will ensure that promise is realised no matter how dark the circumstances become that covenant commitment that covenant relationship between himself and his people will not sever no matter how dark the circumstances become of course what God had promised to fulfil through

Judah that of the coming of Jesus Christ meant that he would preserve his people but they would nevertheless experience pain and suffering and exile to a foreign country but because God is who is he knows that they will not die and dear friends although God's covenant commitment to his covenant people will not sever nevertheless they can experience pain and suffering all whom the Lord loves he chastens and the uncertainty and perplexity that Habakkuk is experienced he clings to what he knows to be true about God and he acknowledges that it is the Lord who is in control and that he has raised and positioned the

Babylonians that they will assume the role he has allocated to them they were the Lord's means of bringing the discipline of the covenant on his erring people on the people that had turned their own way the Lord will discipline his covenant people the Lord will discipline his church and although his covenant commitment it will not break or fail or fall or sever nevertheless they may experience pain and suffering at the moment of chastisement he raised the Babylonians to bring judgment and correction oh Lord thou hast ordained them for judgment and oh mighty God thou hast established them for correction

Habakkuk says thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look on iniquity wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth a man that is more righteous than he Habakkuk acknowledges that God is pure this was always laid out to Israel this was always laid out to the covenant people of God the camp had to be holy because of the Lord's presence in their midst and no one who was unclean was permitted to enter the Lord's sanctuary all the sacrifices had to be pure and undefiled for this alone was accepted in the sight of God and this is exactly that which gives rise to Habakkuk's second problem wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously and told us thy tongue when the wicked devour the man that is more righteous than he the psalmist reminds us that

God takes no pleasure in evil in psalm 34 we read the face of the Lord is against them that do evil to cut off them from the earth but Habakkuk says what about the Babylonians when Habakkuk says here thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil and cast not look on iniquity what he means is that God cannot overlook sin without punishing it God is omniscient he is all knowing and of course he beholds evil and looks on iniquity but he cannot do so with indifference he cannot do so without punishing it it is against God's very nature to overlook sin this is what gives meaning for us to the cross of Golgotha where we see his beloved son suffering what sins deserve in chapter in the answer and the

[48 : 11] Lord answered me and said write the vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that read it for the vision is yet for an appointed time but at the end it shall speak and not lie though tarry wait for it because it will surely come it will not tarry behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him but the just shall live by his faith now we have seen the context in which these words are given the just shall live by his faith there were many things that was causing confusion and perplexity with Habakkuk Habakkuk had his problems with what he was seeing in his own day and maybe I and you are having problems with what we see in our own day maybe we are crying out how long oh

Lord but the Lord is telling us that he is in control that he is sovereign and what is left for me and you is to live by our faith that just shall live by his faith and one of the lessons that the man of faith must learn is to wait upon the Lord one of the lessons that the man of faith must learn is that God is in control and he has set his time that everything is in accordance to God's time people all history is under his control and he informs precisely when it suits his purposes and precisely how he decides it to occur we have an instance of that in the very beginning of the of the Old Testament we are reminded regarding the birth of Isaac when

Sarah was past the age of having children the Lord said is anything too hard for the Lord at the time appointed I will return unto thee according to the time of life and Sarah shall have a son and Psalm 102 will read thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Sion for the time to favour her yet the set time is come everything works not according to my timetable or your timetable but it works according to God's timetable the judge shall live by his faith oh Habakkuk there is an appointed time I have set in my timetable the time when I am going to intervene when I am going to chase in the nation when I am going to chase in Judah I am going to raise up the means by which

I am going to chase Judah I am going to raise up the Babylonians it shall come hastily it shall come quickly I am sovereign and I am working according to my timetable for you it is to live by your faith the just shall live by his faith the just of the righteous will exercise faith by putting their trust in God this is the lesson that Habakkuk was learning and that I and you must learn when our life seems to be falling apart when we are confused and perplexed about the events and circumstances that comes across our path in contrast to the self reliance of the arrogant we are relying on God to solve the deepest problems of our lives that includes being able to go through the dark times when we are unable to see how

God is at work in our lives Habakkuk and those like minded had to be reminded of this so that they would be able to persevere in the difficult time that were in and that was to come upon them you know our problems would be very much less if we took God into the equation but so often we leave him outside or we leave him on the sideline oh Habakkuk the just shall live by his faith and that is the lesson for me and you today however confused and perplexed we may be with what we find in our society today what we find in our nation what we find in our communities today however perplexed and confusing it may be we are to live by our faith we are to live in the knowledge that

[53 : 27] God is in control that God is sovereign we are to live by our faith however dark it may be or may become the just shall live by his faith may the Lord encourage us and strengthen us in our moment of time may we come to rest in the sovereignty of God that this is God's time people that God is speaking to us and telling us I am in control nothing not even the sparrow falls to the ground without me knowing it without me being in control I am in complete control the just shall live by his faith may the

Lord bless our thoughts today let us pray eternal and ever blessed Lord we acknowledge today thy sovereignty over us and we rest in the fact of thy sovereignty today because it brings us to have quietness of spirit and of soul it brings us to have rest even in the midst of the turmoil and the darkness and the confusing times in which we live even when we see those who are showing apathy and indifference to thy word those who are showing defiance to thy word those who have no thought of God those who even never mention God who are going on in self reliance circumstances in which we find ourselves. We pray, O Lord, that they would be enabled to lean upon thee, knowing that thou art the hearer of prayer and also the answerer of prayer. We ask, O Lord, that thou would continue with us, that thou, O Lord, would protect us and take care of us. And all that we ask is in the name of our Lord and Saviour,

Jesus Christ. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.