

My Strength

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[0 : 0 0] It would be good if you keep your Bibles open to Habakkuk. We're going to be looking at all of it this evening, very briefly. Before we do that, let's pray. Almighty God, you are our strength.

You are the lifter of our heads, a shield around us. You are awesome in majesty. You are beautiful in holiness.

Lord, would you capture our hearts, capture our minds and our lives, that we might be utterly captivated by you, completely depending upon you, trusting in your promises and in your truth.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Before I start, I'd like to ask Russell Hackney, the evening service warden, to come up. Russell and I were yakking the other day, and he's just shared a story from his life and his walk with God, which I thought would be helpful because it relates, I think, to the experience of Habakkuk in the book we're looking at today.

Russell. Russell. Hi. Most of you know I'm from England. Just a couple of years before we came to Canada, there was a survey done in England, which was the worst place on earth, the worst place in England to live.

[1 : 3 9] And I come from Stoke-on-Trent, which came bottom of that list. But I worked in a place called Golden Hill in Stoke-on-Trent, which is a wildly optimistic name for a place.

It was 50% accurate. It was a hill. But it wasn't golden. It was quite a run-down area.

I worked for my father's business and the boss's son. I had a room, a small room. Is this still on? Oh, sorry.

I had a small room in the workshop where my father's business was with no windows. I remember it distinctly. It had orange wallpaper. It was tiny, and the whole workshop was opposite a cemetery.

So I'm painting a lovely picture here, aren't I? I used to say to a friend of mine, I work in a box outside a cemetery. And that was how it felt. So I worked there for maybe 16 years.

[2 : 4 5] And in between, I went to art college for a bit as well. And certainly, for the last maybe five or six years of that time working there, my working life was a real disappointment to me.

It was very unsatisfying. What I did at the business was kind of specialized work, and that tailed off. There seemed to be less and less of this work for me to do. But at the same time, ironically, my wages were spiraling upwards.

My father was handing out bonuses to his son and my brother, who worked there too. And I was earning incredible money, but turning up and doing nothing at times.

I used to hide. I used to hide in this little box and get the daily telegraph out. And then if I heard somebody coming near the door, I'd rustle it away under the desk. There was literally nothing for me to do sometimes.

I just felt like I was turning up to collect money, which sounds odd. That could be a bad thing. But it lacked purpose. After a period of time of doing that, my life, my working life, lacked purpose.

- [3 : 55] And I started... I was a Christian at this point. I had been a Christian a while. My church life was great. I was involved in youth work, and that was great. And my social life was pretty good.
- And my working life was just hopeless. So I used to go on my daily dog walking twice a day at the park, which was fairly nearby.
- And I used to pray to God every day virtually. Especially in those last three or four years. And I've called that my kind of yearning period.
- I did... I yearned. And it's funny. One of the things I said to Wendy, my wife, when we were here in Canada after about a year, I said, you know, I've stopped yearning. I don't yearn anymore.
- And what I was yearning for was some way out of this working life, this kind of trap I was in. I felt like getting this great money, but doing nothing.
- [4 : 58] And my male mates would be taking the mickey out of me. Russell and work in the same sentence. You know, that's... That's a joke. And they were right.
- I wasn't... I lacked purpose. So I prayed. And I prayed that... I don't know where Vancouver came from in this, but it came. And I prayed for it.
- And I remember thinking... I remember praying out loud to God many times, giving all this to God in my daily walks with my dog. And saying, God, I can taste this.
- I can feel this almost. It's so real to me, this vision of living and working in Vancouver, which I looked on the internet and came second, I think, in the world's favorite places to live.
- So I was going from bottom in England to second in the world. I thought, why not? Aim high. And prayed and prayed. And then, three years ago, we put our package together, handed it in at the post office to a Christian from our church who we didn't even know worked there, which was kind of strange.
- [6 : 09] And then, five months later, a Christian from our church who I didn't know worked there, a different one, handed it back to us with the results inside. And here we are. So, my encouragement, I suppose, is to say that we should keep on trusting God when we're yearning and when we're finding it very hard.
- And we should take that to God and not be scared to do that. I certainly did for a long time, maybe five years of yearning.
- But, eventually, we came here and life's been very good to us. And God's been extravagantly good to us since we came to Canada. So, that's all I wanted to share. Thank you, Russell.
- I'm glad to see your dog managed to immigrate with you. But, before I start, I just notice Paul Chafee sitting in the back there. Paul, are you back for good? Just on holiday.
- Well, Paul's back from Seoul, so everyone make sure you say hi to Paul at the end of the service. Well, we're going to look at Habakkuk tonight. And I'm going to do all of Habakkuk. So, passing your seatbelts, we're not going to do all of it in great detail.
- [7 : 16] But it's a wonderful little book. An amazing little book there in the middle of the Minor Prophets. And one that is astonishingly often quoted in the New Testament. I was reading a book to my children the other day.
- You may have read this when you were younger. Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Anybody read that book? Who loves that book? Oh, yeah. It's a great book, isn't it?
- It's a story in which Alexander, he seems to be about a seven or eight year old, has a day in which everything goes wrong. He goes about the day feeling grumpy and unhappy and complaining about everything.

There are lima beans for supper. And he hates lima beans. There's kissing on TV. And he hates kissing on TV. The bath was too hot. He got soap in his eyes.

And his marble went down the drain. And he had to wear his railroad pajamas. He hates his railroad pajamas. And he goes around having this horrible day with this dreadful look on his face, feeling really bummed out and complaining and grumbling and griping about everything.

[8 : 18] And finally he has to go to bed. It was a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. But his mother said, sometimes days are like that. Well, that got me to thinking about Habakkuk and about my own life and possibly your own life sometimes.

Because Habakkuk in this book is having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad life. Habakkuk is a prophet.

He's living in the late 7th century in Judah. Judah is part of the divided kingdom of Israel. They've split into two. He's living about the same time as Jeremiah the prophet, the gloomy Jeremiah.

Things are bad. Things are looking very bad. He's a prophet. He knows his scriptures. And all around him, things are going wrong with the nation. Perversion, injustice.

The Torah, the law given by Moses, is in disarray. And Habakkuk has prayed. Habakkuk has prayed and prayed and prayed. And nothing has happened.

[9 : 18] And Habakkuk is in despair in chapter 1. He is in a seriously bad mood. He is grumbling. He is complaining.

And he asks some very pointed questions of God. And there are questions that you may in your own life have wanted to pose to God. And the first one is this. Why aren't you listening to me?

And the second is this. Why do sinful people suffer? Sinful people prosper while righteous people suffer?

Why don't you hear my prayers? And why are these sinful people doing so well while we suffer? You know, you might have been in a similar space with God. You may be in a similar space with God.

You may have complaints or grumbings in your heart against God. There may be things in your life that you have been praying about for a very long time. And yet you have found no answer.

[10 : 15] You may have hopes and dreams you thought God would fulfill in your life. Yet despite all of your prayers, nothing has happened. You live in a beautiful city.

A wonderful city with a great sanity of living. And you see sinful people who disregard God and disobey His laws. And yet living rich, satisfying, fulfilled lives.

And yet you've been trying to live the Christian. And find your prayers are going answered. And you wonder why. And I want to ask you, are you, or have you ever been in that space that Habakkuk is in?

Or that space that Alexander is in? Do you have things that you want to ask God of? Do you have things in your heart that are making you grumpy with God? About the things God has not done in your life?

Or the things God has not brought into your life? What is your space before God right now? What is on your heart with God? Because if there are things weighing on your mind, if there are questions that you want to hurl at God, you can take heart.

[11 : 21] Habakkuk is for you. We're right here in the middle of the Bible. He asks these penetrating questions of God. And right here, God answers. Let's have a look and see what's going on here.

As I say, we're going to look very quickly. I want to look at first, Habakkuk's first complaint and God's bewildering answer. The first question is right there, isn't it?

The beginning of Habakkuk on page 825. Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help and thou wilt not hear? How long? How much should I pray before you're going to answer?

What do I have to do before you're going to step in and intervene in my life? See, what follows in these verses from 2 until 4 is a blistering criticism of all the things that are going wrong in late 7th century Judah.

Habakkuk is not happy because Habakkuk is looking around. He's looking at these people. These are the covenant people of God. They are the people who have been sworn to God by an eternal agreement, if you like.

[12 : 26] That's what the covenant... We talk about covenants in the Old Testament. God made a promise with the people of Israel, created a relationship with them. They were bound into this. And God's covenant people are not living as God covenants people ought to.

They are disregarding their obligations to honor God and obey His commands. Things are not going well. When God swore the covenants with His people, stipulations were made on both parties that God would protect them, that He would keep them on the land, and that they would honor Him as the only God and obey His commands.

And if they breached the agreements by disobeying God and worshiping idols, He would ultimately punish them and drive them from the land. That's what the covenant agreement is about.

An agreement. It's the constitution, if you like, that they all signed up to. They would live for God and live His way, and He would protect them. And underlying those covenants God made with His people is God's great plan of salvation, God's plan to create a nation through whom He would save the world.

See, you go back to Genesis and the story of Abraham. And when God made His first agreement with Abraham, He promised him a nation and a land and a blessing that would extend to all the nations of the earth.

[13 : 54] You see, God right back then was promising that He would create this covenant people, Israel, and out of them would come a Savior. Out would come a salvation that would extend to all the peoples of the world.

You see, it's the gospel. So we go to the 7th century and the problem for Habakkuk is things are looking pretty ropery. In fact, it looks like all that hope and all that promise is going up in smoke because God's special people are in a terrible state.

And Habakkuk knows that if things do not change, then punishment will come. A punishment that will be swift and terrible and the nation will be driven from the land. He's afraid.

He knows it's coming. The people are in breach of their obligations. And he's afraid because he thinks, what happens if Israel is destroyed? What happens if they are overrun?

That's going to be the end. It's the end of the people of God. And if the people of God fail, then that's the end of salvation. The promise will be ended.

[14 : 58] It'll mean nothing. See, he's looking down into this dreadful situation. He's looking all around, seeing all this sin, seeing all this perversion. And he is in despair.

He's been praying out to God, calling out for him to step in and do something. And yet time has gone by, and God hasn't acted. And so he cries out, how long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you will not listen?

You might be praying that way yourself about something. Like Russell, going out for walks with his dog, praying day in, day out. How many years? Three years? Four years?

Sometimes I think we hold these things in our minds and don't ever want to cry out to God for them. But I think you should. You should be encouraged by Habakkuk to bring before God all the concerns that are on your heart.

To hurl at him, not just your joy, but also your grumpiness. Sometimes, like Habakkuk, you despair. You think, there's a problem here in my life that God just can't solve.

[16:07] Or you think, there is a need here in my life God is not going to fulfill. You despair. You think, well, God's not going to answer my prayer. And sometimes that can make you feel grumpy and unhappy with God, like Habakkuk.

And that's hard, isn't it? What's God doing? Why is he not hearing me? Well, let's look at God's answer because God answers him in verse 5.

This is God's bewildering answer. And it doesn't please Habakkuk, I need to say. Because what he says is, I'm going to send the Babylonians. Actually, he calls them here the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, in an outer translation.

Look at verse 5. Look among the nations and see. Wonder and be astounded, for I am doing the work in your days that you would not believe it if told. See, this is going to happen in Habakkuk's lifetime.

They are going to be overrun. For lo, I am rousing the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation who march through the breadth of the earth to seize habitations not their own. The Chaldeans, they're the Babylonians.

[17:13] And he is going to send them. This is God's answer to his prayer. And Habakkuk, and you have to admit, this is going to send him back a bit. Habakkuk is appalled. I mean, this isn't exactly what he was looking for, was it?

He was hoping God would step in and heal the situation, and God said, I'm sending the Babylonians. And he goes, the Babylonians? You're going to send them, those filthy, rotten pigs?

Those violent, lewd, and conceited people? What the heck do you think you're doing? What is God doing? And look what God says about them in verse 6 and following. They're a bitter and hasty nation.

They march through the earth. They seize habitations. They're terrible. Their horses are strifter than leopards, more fierce than evening wolves.

Their horsemen press proudly on. They've got the best cavalry. They all come for violence. Terror of them goes before them. At kings they scoff. Rulers they make sport. They laugh at every fortress.

[18:08] I mean, they're the superpower of their time. They're fearsome, and God is going to send them. And he does. This is not the answer we're looking for.

Habakkuk wanted God to step in and save the situation before it was too late. He wanted God to intervene into the Israel side of things and solve everything before it was too late, before judgment came.

And God says, I'm going to send the Babylonians. They are going to overrun you and crush you. Now that does not mean that God is being, sorry I keep stepping here and getting into a zone somewhere.

That does not mean that God is going to be malicious. That does not mean that God is losing his temper and taking it out on Israel. That does not mean that he's being vindictive or rash or thinking up some inventive way to punish them.

This is God being consistent with his word. You see, he told them when he gave them the law at the time of Moses in Deuteronomy.

[19:10] We saw this last week. He said, do not follow other gods for the Lord is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you and he will destroy you from the face of the land.

See, that's the covenant agreement. They signed on when they became Israel. They ratified this with God. They clicked on, I agree. That was the agreement they made with God.

The problem is, rolling down the time here, they think, oh, it's not going to happen. Paul preaches on this very passage in Acts chapter 13 and you might want to turn to that sometime.

See, it's a real warning against taking God for granted. See, the people here in this situation, they think, nah, see, we're the covenant people of God. We're the special ones.

So the old guy up there is not going to step in. This is the attitude they have. He's not going to do that. Forget it. They think he will never move against them. It's a warning to them and it's a warning to us against taking God's word for granted.

[20 : 11] You see, what you have to see here is that God is not rash. God is not impetuous. God is not vindictive. God is completely consistent at all times with his spoken word.

What God says he will do, he will do. We may break our side of the bargain. We may wander away. But God's plan of salvation marches forward.

The covenant agreement agreed between Israel and God is still in force. Israel is not doing its part of the bargain. God is fulfilling his.

See, that's a very important thing we need to know about how God operates. When we pray for things and ask him to do things, see, I'm actually praying something that God is going to do.

We need to know how this God operates. we need to know what his parameters are. And he gives us that in his written word. And it's not like God didn't tell Israel.

[21 : 12] He wasn't surprising them. He laid it all out. This is how it's going to be. This is going to be our relationship. And they got kind of loose and thought, nah, forget it.

He's not going to do it. And that's a warning to us too. It's a big warning in our own lives. You see, it's the attitude that creeps into yourself when you start playing loose with sin. Because you think, well, God loves me.

He's not going to do anything about it. Friends, that's dangerous. That's dangerous. God takes sin. That thing again. God takes sin. I'll just stand real close over here. God takes sin very seriously.

Very seriously. And we mustn't play with fire in our lives. Let's not be callous about God. Let's not be callous about what he says in his word he wants from us.

Because he is entirely consistent with what he has given us in his word. And he's going to send those Babylonians. Well, that leads us to Habakkuk's second question which takes the first one a little bit deeper.

[22 : 14] And that's verse 12 and following in chapter 1. See, the first question was, God, why don't you hear me? And then, he doesn't quite get a satisfactory answer yet. We haven't gotten to the bottom of this yet, but we've begun to see something of a picture of how God operates.

And so he takes this question a bit further because he looks around and he sees the Babylonians rising up, these fierce and violent, dreadful people. And he sees sinful people in his own society prospering.

And he says, well, God, if you do punish sin like you've just said, when that's what we've just been told, God is going to punish sin, then why, if that's the kind of God you are, do you let sinful people prosper?

I mean, it's kind of strange, isn't it, after all? Why is it that if he is this God who hates sin and punishes it, that the Babylonians are rising up and they're going to come in and take over? Or sinful people in Judah are running around being sinful and nothing's happening?

See, it's a great question. You may be asking that question yourself. I think one of the hardest things about being a Christian is that sometimes we seem to trade in all the blessings of the world around us, or I should say all the pleasures of the world around us that other people seem to be enjoying, and we make a calculation.

[23 : 29] You see, the calculation you make as a Christian is, I'm going to give my life to God, and he's going to forgive me, and he's going to save me for eternity. We talk about making Jesus the Lord of my life.

We submit our lives to his Lordship. And in doing that, we turn fundamentally away from the things of the world, don't we, and say, well, I'm going to turn my back on that. I'm not going to value those things.

I am going to submit myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and he will be my all in all. But I think that sometimes we make a calculation in that, that if I do that, I turn my back on all those things and value them as nothing, and turn my life to Jesus, that he will bring some of those things back into my life.

We calculate that God will supply us with all that we need, maybe materially, or in satisfying relationships, satisfaction, career contentment, a reasonable quality of life.

And it can be very perplexing when these things don't come in your way. When you have given yourself to Jesus, and yet somehow there's something missing, that you're still praying, that you're still seeking, you're still dissatisfied or empty, or there's some problem that just isn't being solved.

[24 : 45] And you see, that can be something that can cause a lot of head-scratching even resentment, because I've lived my life for you, Jesus, and yet I'm living alone, or I don't have a partner, or I am frustrated, or I'm struggling with money, or my career is so unsatisfying, I'm approaching a point in my life and I'm unhappy.

All the while, we see in this beautiful, glorious city of ours, non-Christian people living lives of outright rebellion against God, chasing the pleasures of the world, and frankly, enjoying them.

I mean, isn't that right? Isn't it a wonderful life out there that you see everybody enjoying that we're missing out on? Here in Vancouver, people are free to live outright rebellious and sinful lives, and yet they're free to have everything they want, the most wonderful lifestyle, everything you want.

It's hard when I turn my back on that, and I think, God, why aren't you answering my prayer? Why do these sinful people prosper and have such good lives? Well, I'm struggling.

You know, it's a good question to ask. Habakkuk asked it, and you can ask it too. Well, and God answers with a wonderful answer, and that really takes up all of chapter two, which is where I want to major right now for a couple of moments, because it is an answer to these two questions that is filled with the grossest, wonderful advice you could ever imagine.

[26 : 06] And I need to confess before you, this is God speaking to us. I think it's delightful. It's right from God's mouth to us, and I just feel not up to the task of delivering it to you, so I want you to take this away yourself and meditate on this, because this is God speaking.

But I'm going to do my best. And there is wonderful, wonderful advice here. The key verse in chapter two and God's answer is verse four. Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

This is a key verse in the Bible. It is the gospel, and it is quoted three times in the New Testament, twice by Paul, and once in Hebrews. It is a critical verse.

See, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith. And what God does in this chapter is he weaves a discussion.

He weaves a discussion about the ways and lives of sinful people, and around that he puts three gospel references. That one and then two others.

[27 : 15] And what he is saying is that sinfulness will come and go and it will go on and people will have their lives. But my salvation purposes will go on and they will never fail.

They will go on until the end. Let's have a look. There are two things God focuses on, the sinful and the righteous. Very briefly, what God does is he meditates on the lives of sinful people through these verses.

And what he does is he shows us the real picture of the lives of sinful people. And what he is saying is that sin leads to more sin in people's lives.

And so that while sinful people, people who live godless and rebellious lives, these wretched Babylonians, may appear to be in the ascendant right now, they may appear to be enjoying themselves right now, in the end, their sinfulness and their rebellion against God will have its reward in more sin.

But you may not see that happen. See, look at verse 6. He's talking about both the Babylonians and also just sinful people more generally. Shall not all these take up their taunt against him in scoffing derision of him and say, Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own.

[28 : 39] For how long? And loads himself with pleasures. Verse 7. Will not your debtor suddenly arise? And those awake who will make you tremble, then you will be booty for them, because you have plundered many nations and the remnants of the people shall plunder you for the blood of man and violence to the earth, to cities and all who dwell therein.

You see, God is showing a much bigger picture. There's Habakkuk living his life and the threat of the Babylonians about to come in and take over and he's freaking out because they're so powerful, they're so strong, they're so sinful and he can't believe it.

But God steps back and he sees the whole picture and he can see that while they will plunder everything in sight, their own violence will have its own reward. The other nations will come and plunder them.

And you see, the point is that sin has its own reward. Sin leads to more sin. And it's the same in your life too. See, it's very tempting to become grumpy.

When, as a Christian, you feel there are some areas in your life where you are lacking the enjoyments of people who live godless, sinful lives, we do live in a city where godlessness flourishes.

[29 : 55] People have immense disposable incomes in which they spend in their lifestyle. They have money to spend on making themselves look fantastic at the gym. People are free to enjoy sexual relationships whenever they please.

And that can look very tempting because I'm a Christian and I'm seeking to live my life for Christ. Therefore, I am not in a sexual relationship and I envy them. But God's answer is this.

Do not envy the sinful because you do not see the whole picture. You do not see the ramifications of their sin and you cannot see down the road. See, Habakkuk's problem is he was so concerned with what is happening right here and right now that he could not relate what was going on in his life to the awesome majesty of God.

And that's why he got grumpy. And you might be struggling with that too. You might be overly concerned, overly focused upon your problems and issues, what you have and do not have.

That's not to say that they are not real problems and not real issues. They are and they are important to God. But is your interior space marked by a grace-filled devotion to God or are you feeling cheated by God?

[31 : 17] Are you someone who lives with such a union to God that you are utterly grateful for all that he has done for you and wait upon him to fulfill your life? Or are you looking at the sinful people around you and envying them?

It's very easy to do. I do that too. I find it very difficult to have lived for Christ and made decisions in my life around that and find friends of mine in high school who have beautiful houses that they own that are fully furnished and nicely decorated too.

I mean it's hard. But friends listen to God's advice. Do not envy sinful people who live godless lives because you do not see the whole picture.

You do not see down the road and you are being preoccupied in the wrong place. We don't want to be preoccupied with the sinful. But the other side of God's answer is the righteous shall live by his faith.

The righteous shall live by his faith. Say that with me brothers and sisters. The righteous shall live by his faith. And that means that we live in the certainty of promise.

[32 : 22] Because we do not have the whole picture yet. Everything is not completed. We are not perfected. And Jesus has not yet come again. But we believe in the awesome promises of God which are not thwarted.

which are never going to end. And which will be fulfilled. We live in a time of promise. And we live by our faith in God's promises.

And what God does is in this passage he takes Habakkuk and points them towards two major points in the history of his promises. And the first is verse 14. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

You see what God is doing here? We've already seen verse 4. The righteous shall live by his faith. We go in this discussion about sin and at the end he says verse 14.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Remember the promise I told you about back in the time of Abraham when God promised a nation, a land, and a blessing to go out to all nations, all the peoples of the earth.

[33 : 39] And what God is saying here is that that promise is still in force and I am still working and it is still going to happen. And do you remember what happened after Jesus rose again from the dead and before his ascension he gathered the disciples and said go out and make disciples of all nations.

The gospel has been released to all nations so that everyone, man and woman and child, can become a Christian and be saved. This has happened. The gospel has gone out. It is no longer confined to Israel.

And then God points Habakkuk further still and that's verse 20. But the Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him. That pushes us further on to revelation, to the time when Jesus comes again as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, when all humanity will behold and will bow the knee before him.

On the day when everyone will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, a day that will be glorious for those who do so now. But for those who do not, it will be a day of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But the day will come when every human being will know that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And you see what's going on? There's this discussion about sin. Sin goes on and sinful people rise and sinful people fall.

[34 : 53] But God's promises will never fall. God will see his word completed. He will see this through to the end. The righteous will live by their faith. We live in faith in the great promises of God.

Yes, the sinful will prosper and the nations will rise and fall. But it will not matter. And for Habakkuk, Israel will be overrun.

The nation will be destroyed. But this will not be the end. It will not be the end of God's plan for salvation.

salvation. Because God promised. He promised a blessing that will go out to all the ends of the earth and it will be fulfilled and all will know that Yahweh is God and there is no other.

See, we live in promise. And you see how in the course of this book we have turned directions. Habakkuk started off having had this grumpy, terrible, very good, no good, no terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

[35 : 52] And he's looking down here and he looks at everything and he can't relate it to God and he can't see any way out. And over the course of this answer what God has done has turned him so that now he is looking at Almighty God.

He is rooted in the promises of God. He is focused on God. And so suddenly everything that is happening around him looks very different.

And that takes me to the end, chapter 3, and with this I'm going to close. Chapter 3 of Habakkuk is your homework. I want you to take this home and pray about it, meditate upon it, sing it, and ask yourself this question, am I this kind of person?

Or am I Habakkuk one kind of person? This is actually a psalm. It was sung in public worship. Habakkuk sung this answer.

And very simply what he does in the opening verses is he looks back, verses 1 to 16, essentially, he works back and he reflects upon the nature of who God is.

[37 : 03] And he outlines the things God has done and the power that he brings. And he sees that God intervened. He recounts the story of the Exodus. Exodus.

He recounts the power of God in delivering his people. And he saw that God did indeed step in and save.

Verse 4, his brightness was like the light. Rays flashed from his hand and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence and plague followed close behind.

He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. Then the eternal mountains were scattered. The everlasting hills sank low. See, God is powerful.

Verse 13, thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, for the salvation of thy anointed. Thou didst crush the head of the wicked. See what he's come to see?

[38 : 06] He's going back and looking at the Exodus and realizes that God did act to save. When God took the people out of Egypt, he was keeping his word. And he sees that God is consistent.

He does crush wickedness. No, this is who God is. This is who God is. You see, one of the reasons why you often feel at sea in your Christian faith is you don't know who God is.

You don't know his character or his nature. That's why I want you to meditate on this verse. See, if you want security and certainty in your life, in the here and now, the answer is not to look down upon your own situation and your problems and become obsessed with them and demand that God cast his light on them.

The answer is for you to engage with him, with the nature of who he is, with the reality of what he does. And then you will face the present, like Habakkuk.

Look at verse 16. I hear and my body trembles, my lips quiver at the sand. Boy, I felt like that when I had my wisdom teeth taken out. And yet, I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us.

[39 : 20] I'm going to wait for God to act. And then these beautiful verses. Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.

That's what's going to happen. It's coming. Punishment is coming. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Recognize those words? The Virgin Mary quoted those words when the angel of the Lord came to her and said she would bear the Messiah. She, a virgin, unmarried, would bear the Messiah.

And those are words of faith. Not faith in the abstract. Not faith in better times to come. Not faith that something might happen, but faith in the power of God to overcome any obstacle, to solve any problem, to open any door, to do whatever it takes that his will will be accomplished.

Yes, Israel will be overrun and destroyed. I will rejoice in God my Savior. Yes, there will in all of our lives be troubles and tribulation, but will you despair of God or will you trust in his promises?

[40 : 36] God the Lord is my strength. Is he yours? Is he yours? Take a moment now and just be quiet before God.

I'm doing what the words was great.