

Habakkuk 1

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Date: 15 September 2019

[0 : 00] Go ahead and take your Bibles this evening, and you can look with me in the book of Habakkuk. Almost to the end of the Old Testament, if you are not sure where that would be at, the book of Habakkuk, you're going to say, how are you going to tie the book of Habakkuk into a missions conference, right?

And so we'll ask the Lord to help us with that. But I wanted to share a little bit with you with a few photos and videos with the time that I have. And so I'd like to, before we get in the message, do that.

I've got a few pictures there in the back that we'll share. And as they start putting those up, this first picture you're going to see there is in Cuba. That is Enrique and his wife, Annette.

And on the other side, it's some Mexican missionaries. It's Oscar Pedroza and his wife. And what a blessing. Through the church in Mexico, we began to support the Mexican missionaries.

And through them, we were able to go and visit there in Cuba for a whole week. I got to meet Enrique, who's a phenomenal young man who knows his Bible. I was absolutely just blown away with this young man.

[1 : 02] And he asked me at the end of the week, he said, I'd like to become a member of your church. And I said, a member of my church? You're in Cuba. And he said, I know. He said, but I need a good church so I can start a church. And I said, well. And we started checking him out and seeing where he came from and what he was, other churches he was a part of.

We talked about doctrine. We talked about eight hours a day. And at the end of the week, he said, well, pastor, can I be a member of your church? And I said, I'll pray about it. I went back to Mexico after that and prayed about it.

And God gave me peace and said, let him be a member of your church. You can reach into Cuba. Amen. And so I began to talk back and forth. And just in recent months, he has been talking back and forth, desiring to start a church there with the Mexican missionary.

And they are contacting me every single week and talking to me about the details and what's going on. And they let me know some different needs. And I put a video out and literally two days later, \$6,500 were giving for that need to help them start that church in Cuba.

So God's doing some awesome things in Cuba as a result of going to Mexico. So you never know what's going to happen. You never know where God's going to take you and how God's going to use you. If we go on to the next picture there, this is just a picture of some of the men and the guys that are there between the two churches.

[2 : 11] And there I am in the middle of the cake. That was my birthday this past May. And there behind me you have, right directly behind me you have Jesus, Emiliano, Manuel, and Samuel.

All of those are graduates of a Bible seminary there. They've all finished with 128 credit hours. And then those other two young men on the outside, those are two young men that Brother Jesus, their second church plant, is discipling and spending time with.

I really don't even spend time with him, but he's doing that, and it's such a huge blessing to see what God's doing through that. We'll get to the next photo here. This is Alfredo Maria Elena. I've shared a lot about them because I love this couple to death.

And they came to church their first Sunday that we had the first church service in 2014. They showed up. He closed his store down to come to church. Little did I know they had a lot of problems in their marriage.

And after that, they began to come faithfully. Every Sunday morning, they'd come. And one Sunday morning, I was talking about the reality of heaven and the reality of hell. And that Sunday morning, they both gave their life to Jesus and both got saved.

[3 : 12] A few weeks later, they both got baptized there. They were in the first batch of people that I was able to baptize there in Mexico. And after that, we began to see God work in their marriage. And God began to take away the bitterness and all of the resentment and insecurity that was in the heart of the wife.

And began to change that couple. You can see in the picture there, they're holding hands. This is a lady who, when I met her, was not happy. This is a lady who was ready to give up on her marriage. She was wanting out.

She told her husband, I'm done. I don't want to be with you anymore. I really don't even care about our grandchildren. I just want out of this. I'm miserable. She couldn't sleep at night. She was taking sleeping pills. She was talking to different people to get help, paying them money just to tell her what she could possibly hear that would help her.

Well, she heard the gospel, and the gospel changed her life. They're still in church. I just got a picture from the church this morning, and they were there at church this morning. They've now been married for 45 years.

The next picture we have here is Diego and Alma. They are a couple that, because of Alfredo and Maria Elena coming to church, Alma, that you can see there in the picture with my family, the mother.

[4 : 18] She began to come with her daughter, Jimena, who's right next to her. And when they became to come, Diego, the husband there, did not want to come to church. He was not excited about coming to church. He really was his own guide, if I were to be really honest with you, like so many people.

His parents are both Catholic. They both are deacons in the Catholic church. So Diego was done with religion. But when he came to church, he began to find out that it's not about religion. It's about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Two weeks later, he was sitting in my living room. I am talking to him, sharing the gospel with him with my Bible in my hand. And he stops me and he says, that's enough. And I said, what do you mean that's enough? He said, that's enough. I'm convinced.

I said, what are you convinced about? He said, I'm convinced about what you're saying. I want to get saved. He said, what do I need to do? And I said, talk to Jesus. And so he, without bowing his head and closing his eyes, he looked straight up at heaven and he began to talk to Jesus.

And he told Jesus that he wanted him to be his own personal Lord and Savior. Now, I want you to see, just so you'll believe me, a video of Diego and Alma as they tell us about their story.

[5 : 16] And then right after the video, I'm going to share just a little bit more about them before we get into the message. So if you'll go to the video. Hello, everyone. Just wanted to share this quick talk about how Jesus saved us, saved me and my family about five years ago, thanks to a missionary.

I mean, thanks to God, but through a missionary that came to our town. Now our lives are changed. My marriage is changed. My in-laws' marriage is changed.

Now I serve in the ministry of my local church here in Baja California. And we are very happy. And thank God for his grace.

Hello to everyone. Say hello. Hello. God bless you. Bye. About a year ago, Diego called me and said, Pastor, I need to talk to you.

I said, what's going on? He said, my job has moved me to Baja California. And that was a very sad day for this pastor. I say pastor because I was his pastor there in Mexico. And we had a last service for them. And we cried.

[6 : 26] And I cried. And God moved them to Baja California, which is actually Mexico still. But it's just called Baja California. And I remember he told me, but Pastor, I want you to help me. I need to get a Baptist church when I get there.

So I helped him. And we went and found him a Baptist church. And he remains there to this day serving the Lord. His daughter, Ximena, she walked out of her room one day after seeing what God had done in her grandparents' marriage.

And she walked out of her room. She had a box full of idols and things and the Virgin Mary. And she gave it to her mother. And she said, Mom, I don't need these things anymore. And her mom said, What do you mean you don't need these things?

She said, Well, I don't need them. I have Jesus. I could tell you another story. I was going to have the picture, but I didn't have time to find it. The grandmother of Ximena, which is the mother of Alfredo, she was dying there in the hospital.

And Alfredo called me up and said, My mom's dying. I need you to go with me and help to pray for her and maybe reach her with the gospel. So we jumped in his car and we drove straight to Mexico City. And when we got there, thinking we probably would not get in, he said, Let's pray that we can get in the hospital.

[7 : 30] Because a lot of times they won't let you in the hospital if you're not immediate family, if you're not the son or the father or mother. So we got there and his sister had already talked to the people. And we literally drove up and walked straight in.

And they let us come in. I was able to give the gospel to his mother. And from what we could tell, she got saved. And we had one month after that time to go and visit her and sing to her and give her Bible.

And she was encouraged in the Lord right before she died. I don't know if you realize that that's four generations. That's the grandmother. That's Alfredo. That's his daughter Alma and Ximena.

That's four generations. God is doing some awesome stuff. And we are excited about what he's doing. And I tell you that none of this is because of us. None of this is because we are special.

It's only because we have a great God. It's because we have a God who will do some awesome things, some incredible things that we could never imagine possible. And so please continue to pray for Mexico.

[8 : 25] We need more laborers. We have 130 million people in that country. And from what I can see, we have one missionary to Mexico with vision about his missions at this time. So we need more. Go with me through your Bibles and let's go to Habakkuk chapter 1.

I want you to see this passage tonight. And I want you to kind of understand. I'm not going to read through the whole book. But I want to hit a few verses and I'm going to give you a little bit of context so we can go quickly. But I want you to see here what's going on with the book of Habakkuk.

I want you to see there in verse 2. This is the burden of Habakkuk, the prophet. And he says there in chapter 1 verse 2, O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou shalt not hear?

Even cry out 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 there are that raise up 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.

[9 : 26] This is the burden. This is the, if you could call it the murmurings. This is Habakkuk sharing his heart and saying, I don't understand what is going on in these moments. I don't know how it's possible that this whole thing is going to end up okay.

This seems to be going in the wrong direction, God. And he was waiting on God to give him a response that would have probably been a response that you and I would like to hear from God a lot of times. We'd like God to give us this nice response that we're going to be able to understand and we're going to be able to say, yeah, God, that's a great idea.

That's what I thought we should do too. But a lot of times that's not the response that we get from our God. And here we see in verse 5 the response of God to Habakkuk. It says, 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. I'm going to work such a work in your days, Habakkuk, you're not going to be able to believe it.

I could tell it to your face right now and you wouldn't believe it. You wouldn't be able to believe it. It's going to be that kind of work. And he goes on and he talks about how he's going to use that wicked nation, the Chaldeans, and he's going to use them against his people in order to do God's will.

[10 : 40] And we as Christians look at this passage and we think, what is going on? Why is this happening? How a pure, holy God would allow this to happen?

There are verse 6, For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the brink of the land to possess the dwelling places that are what? Not theirs.

Do you ever come to a place in life and here we are talking about world evangelism and how we can reach the world for Christ? I think sometimes this right here is what keeps us from going forward for world evangelism.

I think sometimes we don't understand everything and sometimes God tells us something and we don't agree or we want to know more and we begin to go to God instead of praying, instead of trusting. We tell God what we think and He tells us what He's going to do and we go, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, I can't believe that.

I don't think that's possible. I don't think that's going to be able to happen. What are you doing, God? I don't understand. And you can read there. We go down for time's sake to verse 12. Chapter 1, verse 12.

[11 : 44] Art thou not, this is Habakkuk, talking to God, not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my unholy one, we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment and Almighty God thou hast established them for correction.

Thou art of pure eyes 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 the man that is more righteous than he.

Habakkuk is, once he has heard the response of God, there in those few verses, starting in verse 5, he is now responding and he is actually telling God Himself, God, I know you are a pure God, you're a holy God, therefore you must do it this way and he is not aligned with God.

He's not trusting God yet. He is still going to God frustrated, thinking, what is happening? What's going on here? Do we ever do that in our life? Has God ever given us a response?

Has He ever done something around us and we're thinking, what's going on, God? I don't agree with this. This is not okay, God. You're a good God. I thought you were a good God. Where are you at? What are you doing?

[12 : 54] Aren't you a pure God? Aren't you a holy God? Aren't you going to take care of your people? And we have a hard time trusting Him.

We have a hard time believing that somehow through all of this stuff that's going on, something beautiful is going to come out of it. This is the response that we can find there in the beginning of chapter 2.

It says, God is responding and He says now in verse 4, which is one of the key verses, I believe in this book, it says there in verse 4, Behold, His soul which is lifted up is not upright in Him, but the just, you ready for this?

Shall live by faith. You see, God is not wanting us to understand everything. God is not wanting us to be able to, I'm going back to Spanish, captar, hermanos, to understand all this stuff.

He wants us to be able to trust Him even when we don't understand. He wants us to bow the knee. And I think for me and my life, I think about Mexico and we think about the world and we think, man, we've done a great job, we've got missionaries on the wall, but I just don't know how we're going to do this.

[14 : 28] I don't know how we're going to reach the world. I don't know how we're going to do this. It seems impossible. God, are you sure you know what you're doing? And we begin to not trust Him. We begin to figure it out ourselves.

We begin to murmur instead of pray and trust. You see, verse chapter 3, before we get there, I want to see the last verse of chapter 2 with you. If you go home and read these chapters, it'll blow your mind.

This is an awesome story. Look what it says in the last verse of chapter 2, verse 20. This is what God wants us to know. This is what He wanted Habakkuk to know. It says, But the Lord is in His holy temple.

Let all the earth keep silence before Him. You know what God's telling us to do, church? He's saying, bow the knee. He said, You're not going to understand.

Don't worry about it. I'm a big God. I'm doing some big stuff and you're not going to understand everything. And that's okay. Bow the knee. Why bow the knee? Because I'm in my holy place, temple.

[15 : 31] Everything's going to be okay. Everything's going to be fine. Now you see, chapter 3, now it's not the burden of Habakkuk, it's the prayer of Habakkuk.

Look what it says. The prayer of Habakkuk. Verse 2, it says, O Lord, I have heard thy speech and was afraid. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years and the midst of the years make known and where I have to remember mercy.

Come, God came from Tammon and the Holy One from Mount Paran, Selah. His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise.

It sounds like a whole other man talking in chapter 3. Now Habakkuk is not worried about everything. I will remind you, Christian, God has not changed the situation for Habakkuk. The situation is exactly the same.

And yet, now in chapter 3, he is saying, I will trust you. I will see you as a good God and I will trust you instead of saying, you're a good God and why won't you do things for me and manipulating God like we do so many times.

[16 : 35] You're a good God. If you're a good God, you'd do that for me. You'd change this for me. You'd help me in this area. But instead of trying to manipulate God using His goodness to our advantage, we just trust Him.

We just trust Him. Look what it says, quickly, verse 17. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines.

The labor of the olives shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat. The flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no hurt in the stalls. All of these negative things. Even if none of this stuff happens, he says, verse 18.

Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. He said, it's okay if I don't understand.

It's okay if you're going to do some stuff and some wild stuff, some crazy stuff. It's okay and I'm probably a mess and this nation's a mess and I don't see how these things don't turn out good but that's okay because you are in your holy temple.

[17 : 41] You are in control. You're doing your work and I'm going to trust you and I'm going to praise you because I do trust you. Verse 19. The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like hinds feet and He will make me to walk upon my high places to the chief singer on my stringed instrument.

He's praising. He's worshiping. The situation did not change. Could it be tonight that we need to trust Him even though we don't understand?

Could it be tonight that there's some stuff, there's some junk going on in our life and maybe that's keeping us from trusting Him and because we don't trust Him, we don't serve Him, we don't praise Him, we don't worship Him, we don't take His word to the world because we're just not so sure if He's got this thing figured out.

Our God is in His holy temple and it is our job to keep silent before Him because He knows what He's doing and He is a good God and He'll continue to do some good and awesome things if we'll trust Him.

Quickly go with me to Psalm 18. Quickly to Psalm 18. I want you to see this with me. Psalm 18. See if I can find my verses here quickly.

[19 : 16] Look what it says in Psalm 18 and look at verse 46. Psalm 18. 1846. The Lord liveth and blessed be my rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

Now, you say that's a good verse but look what it says in verse 45. The strangers shall fade away and be afraid out of their close places.

You see, I want you to understand something tonight. When you trust God, you allow God to work in and through your life.

When you trust God, you allow God to get the glory and you allow this world to be evangelized in this generation. Will we dare to trust Him?

And I don't know what you're going through tonight. It could be that there's something going on in your life and it has nothing to do with reaching the world but it could be that that one thing is keeping you from reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[20 : 26] Will you trust Him, Christian? Will you allow Him to be God? And every man a liar. We allow Him to be God and let Him do what He wants to do because that's what God does.

And He loves us. And He's going to take care of us. I believe that God's got awesome things for Vision Baptist Church and it is an honor for me to be part of this church and it is an honor to be part of all that God's going to do in this coming year for worldwide missions.

But Christian, brothers and sisters, we must trust Him. Heads, bowels, and bowels.