

# Missionary Graham Young - Habakkuk's Song

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's open the Bible to the book of Habakkuk. I almost said Habakkuk. That's how we say it there. The book of Habakkuk. It's after Nahum. If you don't know where Nahum is, go to the front.

The book of Habakkuk. We all have the sense that there is something wrong with the world. That things are not right.

They're not the way they're supposed to be. And it's a good thing that you have that sense because that sense is right. And we all do. That things are not the way they're supposed to be. And we wonder why it is that things are wrong.

Why bad things happen to us, to other people. Why bad things are happening in the world. Why these things go on. And that question, why, comes to our minds and into our hearts very frequently.

Even if we don't express it with our mouths. And those whys, we can direct them outward into the world. Asking the world and its wisdom, why.

[ 0 : 57 ] Or we can ask God. Sometimes we're afraid to ask God why. Because it can seem a little bit disrespectful. It seems like something we're not supposed to do. Because God's always right. He is. So we get a little bit intimidated.

Why should I ask God why? And these questions that we have. This sense that something's wrong. Sometimes we feel like it's something new. Like, you know, we're 21st century modern people.

Very sophisticated in the way we think. And until now, no one's ever thought those things before. So we can't turn to the Bible for the answers. But none of that's true. And in this little book of Habakkuk, we get to see a prophet's conversation with God.

The essential job of a prophet is to, he goes and he speaks to God. God speaks to him. And he takes that message that God has given him.

And he goes and he gives it to the people. Usually the people of Israel in the Old Testament. But Habakkuk is not really like that. Usually in Isaiah, Jeremiah, we're seeing God gives a message to Isaiah.

[ 1 : 59 ] They go and they preach it to the people. But in Habakkuk, we get to see the prophet's conversation with God. It's not focused on him going and preaching to the people.

But we're seeing God speaking to him. And Habakkuk wondering why. God telling him what's going to happen. And Habakkuk not understanding. Habakkuk looking at the suffering, the desolation, the destruction.

And saying, God, why? I don't understand. And we get to see God's answer to that. And we're going to look at three things. Very simple things. First of all, our question. The second thing, God's answer.

And the third and the last thing, our response to God's answer. So we're all asking why. We wonder why are things happening. Why is there suffering? Why is there whatever these things that are going on in our life and around the world.

Why is a question. And you usually expect a reason. If you ask someone why, you want a reason. Why did you do this? They're going to tell you why they did it. But God's answer to our why is usually not the reason why he did it.

[ 3 : 04 ] He usually doesn't clue us in on the reasons he's doing all the things he's doing. We're probably not going to know those things. His answer is usually a who. His answer is usually to tell us that I am God.

And our job is to accept that answer. Our job is to accept that answer. So let's look at the book of Habakkuk. Chapter 1, verse number 1. It says, Habakkuk comes from the nation of Israel.

And what's going on in his country, the special people of God who are supposed to be worshipping him and teaching other people to worship him, is that the prophets, the priests, the kings, the rulers are all corrupt.

They're not worshipping God. The temple has been perverted. The people are worshipping idols. And the kings and the prophets and the priests are teaching them to worship idols. And Habakkuk, who loves God, speaks to God, and wants his country to follow God, is saying, God, why is this what's happening?

Why is this what you're making me look at? Why are these the people that I'm preaching to? Why aren't they listening? Why aren't people following you? What's going on? Why is there wickedness? Because faithful people, people that love God, struggle with evil.

[ 4 : 46 ] We struggle with evil. And that's a good thing. It's a good thing. We should. We should see the things that are going on in the world. People suffering that don't deserve to suffer sin and wickedness and evil things.

And we don't like it. It causes strife in our heart. There's a struggle going on inside of us. We struggle with evil. And that's a good thing. You shouldn't desire to stop having a struggle with evil inside your heart.

You just have to know where to go with that struggle. And it seems sometimes like God is indifferent. That's what Habakkuk is feeling like. He's saying, Lord, why am I crying out to you and you're not listening?

Even in verse number three, it seems like he's almost blaming it on God. He says, God, why are you the one making me look at iniquity and violence and all these horrible things? Why is this what's going on?

And this is something that people have felt for a long time. It seems like God is indifferent to what's happening. It seems like He's not listening and watching what's going on in my life. You know Psalm 13, verse number one and two.

[ 5 : 46 ] The psalmist writes, How long will thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? We feel like, you know, I'm struggling with these things that are going on in my life and I feel like God's not listening.

And we think, you know, I have nowhere to turn with this. But the Bible was written to help people get through a world that's full of evil, wickedness, and all these different things.

So we should expect when we have these feelings and these thoughts that God's not listening, that God's indifferent, that there's evil in the world and I'm struggling with it, we go to the Bible and see that there are answers and people have dealt with these things before.

So we have a struggle with evil. And what Habakkuk does, and what we can do, is we can pray for justice. Have a supplication for justice. Look at verse number four.

Habakkuk 1.4 says, Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth. For the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.

[ 6 : 50 ] Habakkuk becomes, he's a little bit worried because he's preaching the Word of God is there, and it seems like the Word of God is what he's saying is it's paralyzed. We know that the Word of God is powerful.

Sometimes people don't listen to the Word of God. A lot of the time people don't listen to the Word of God, and people don't really care what it has to say all around the world. So it seems like that powerful Word, that righteousness, that judgment of God, it seems like it's paralyzed.

It seems like it has no power. We want the justice. We want God to reign and do everything perfectly, but that's not happening. So we want justice. Of course we want justice.

God placed that desire there. But we can't forget that God is still working, even though He's not finished with this world. He's still working in this world right now.

God is the one that is in charge, even now. Even though there's evil in their sin, God is still in charge. Proverbs says that the king's heart is in His hand, and He turns it like a river.

[ 7 : 54 ] He's in charge of the people that are in charge. God's still ruling, but we don't always like His solution to our problems. Habakkuk says, God, why are all these things happening?

And God gives him an answer. Verse number 5. So we're looking in on a conversation, and God begins to speak in verse number 5. He says, And He says, And He says, So Habakkuk's problem was that Israel was wicked.

And He asked God to solve it. God says, I'm going to solve it, Habakkuk, but you're not going to believe the way I'm going to solve it. Because Israel's wicked, but the solution to their wickedness is someone that's even more wicked.

The solution to the sin is a people, is a nation that's even more sinful than Israel. In the rest of chapter number 1, it just goes on and explains how evil and wicked the Chaldeans, the Babylonians are.

They're so wicked, they're so confused in their sins that as they're conquering, as they're prospering, as they're getting all this wealth, it says they're like a fisherman that goes fishing with his net. He throws it into the sea, and he pulls his fish onto the land, and then he turns around, and he worships the net.

[ 9 : 29 ] They're so confused by their sin that they worship the creation, they worship themselves, they worship their swords and their chariots. They kill innocent people, all they do is destroy.

And that's what God is going to use. And Habakkuk can't believe it. In chapter number 1, we won't read all that he has to say, he's speaking to God again after God gives his answer, and he says, God, you are holy and righteous and just.

He says, you can't even look on iniquity. So how are we going to use these people? He doesn't understand. So we ask for justice. God has a solution. We're asking why.

Why are you allowing all these things to happen in the world? God's going to do something about it, but we don't always like it. We don't always like it. So our question is, why?

But God has an answer. And the answer is not always the thing he does to work in the world, not always the solution to our problem. His answer is, I'm God.

[ 10 : 32 ] Habakkuk's saying, God, why are all these things happening? God doesn't tell him why. He doesn't tell him why he allows Israel to be wicked. He does not tell him why he uses the Chaldeans. Go to the book of Job.

Job's main question all throughout the book is, God, why are you allowing this to happen? I've been righteous. I've been your servant the whole time. And yes, at the end, God prospers Job, then he gives him all those things that he had lost, but God never tells him why.

You do not see where God comes to Job and tells him, well, Satan came and he wanted, he asked if I had any servants who actually loved me. And so I did all this to you. I don't even think Job would have been happy if God had told him that.

Would you? He didn't tell him why. So we ask God why. His answer most of the time is I am God.

I am God. Go to Habakkuk chapter number two. Habakkuk number two. So Job has asked God why. And now he's ready to receive God's answer.

[ 11 : 37 ] Chapter two, verse number one. 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 approved.

And the Lord answered me and said, write the vision, make it plain upon the tables that he may run that readeth it. So Habakkuk asks why. We have these questions.

I've already said, the right place to bring them to is God. The sin is in an asking God. It's not even in asking him why. Where we go wrong is when we're not humble enough, meek enough to receive his answer.

Habakkuk says, I'm going to stand upon my tower. I'm going to wait for God's answer. When he answers me, I'll be reproved. Habakkuk already stands that he already understands that he's the one that's wrong.

It's not God. So I don't understand. It's not because God is unrighteous. It's not because he's somehow made a mistake. It's not because he's not wise enough or powerful enough to do things the way they need to be done.

[ 12 : 41 ] The problem is on my part. The lack of understanding, the lack of wisdom is on my part. So when God answers me, I'm going to stand upon my tower.

I'm going to wait for the answer and I'm going to allow myself to be reproved. Where we go wrong is when we don't accept God's answer that he's God. When we don't humble ourselves, say, God, I'm asking you why and whatever you say is correct.

Even if I don't like what you're doing, even if I don't like that Israel's wicked and you're going to use the Chaldeans to punish us, even if I don't like that you're not answering my prayers and giving me the blessings that I'm asking for, I'm not seeing your hand in my life like I want to or like I have in the past.

I'm going to ask and when you answer me, I will receive that answer, I will be reproved, and I will accept it. That was Habakkuk's attitude. That was his approach to God and that's the way we should be.

So God's answer is, I'm God. And he tells us about himself. First of all, he's righteous. He's faithful. Verse number two, he says, write the vision, make it plain upon the tables.

[ 13 : 50 ] He says that he may spread it around. Verse number three says, 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. God is faithful and righteous. What he said will happen. The prophecies of the scripture will come to pass. Even though he's delaying, even though he's tarrying, we know why he's doing that and it's so that you could get saved.

Look in 2 Peter, so that someone else can get saved. So even though it seems like he's not been faithful to his word and all these things are happening that shouldn't happen, even though it tarries, it's not really tarrying.

He's still working. He says, even though it tarries, it won't tarry. Even though it seems like we're waiting and God, Jesus needs to come, he needs to solve this, he needs to make everything right, he's still working now.

And he's still faithful to his word. He's not unrighteous that he's forgotten that he won't do what he said. He's not unrighteous that he'll allow evil and wickedness to go unpunished. One day, he's actually going to make every wrong right.

- [ 14 : 58 ] One day, he will judge sin. And people that are prospering now because of their wickedness will be humbled, will be punished. And the people that are suffering now because of their righteousness will be rewarded and glorified with their Savior.

He's not unrighteous, he's not unfaithful that he would forget and that he would allow evil to go unpunished. He's watching, he sees everything. Go to verse number 18. Habakkuk 2.18 says, What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it?

The molten image and a teacher of lies that the maker of his work trusteth therein to make dumb idols. Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake! To the dumb stone, Arise!

It shall teach! Behold, it is labored over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. It's talking about idols, but those idols are being compared to the Lord.

The idol, it has to be made. It has to be made by a craftsman. And in the book of Isaiah, there's another passage that it's almost humorous.

- [ 16 : 05 ] It talks about the idol maker. He carves the idol and he bows down and he worships it. And then with the carvings that came off the idol, he uses it to cook his food. The idol can't hear.

The idol can't listen. The idol can't answer prayers. It can't speak. It has no power. It can't do anything. But our Lord's not like that. We feel like He's not watching.

We feel like He's indifferent, but that's not true. Idols are indifferent. All the things that we desire in our heart that aren't God, those things, they are indifferent to your suffering.

Money doesn't really care if you're suffering or not. Status doesn't really care if you're suffering or not. But God does care. And He is watching. His ears are open. His eyes are open. He's seeing everything.

He's watching. He's everywhere. He's in charge. And the next thing is that He is King and He is holy. Look at verse 20.

- [ 17 : 02 ] We've already read about all the idols. Habakkuk 2.20 says, But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him. The world is striving.

There's wars. There's fighting. Disease. Sorrow. Death. But God is still on His throne. He's still seated in the holiest of places.

And the whole world is silent before Him. When the world stands before God, it can't oppose Him. All the most wise, all the smartest, most intelligent people, they don't have an answer for Him.

They're silent before Him. God is still holy. He's still in charge. He's still King. So, Habakkuk asked why. God's answer was not, Well, Habakkuk, I'm going to do this and this and this so that I can do this.

And one day, Jesus is going to be born in Bethlehem. He didn't tell that to Habakkuk. He didn't say, I'm going to allow you to suffer. People aren't going to listen to your message. The kings and the prophets are still going to be corrupt.

- [ 18 : 16 ] And then, a nation is going to come and tear down the walls of Jerusalem. They're going to burn down Solomon's temple. all the princes, all the people, they're going to be carried captive. That's not what he says.

He says, I'm still seated in my holy temple. And then, Habakkuk's response is something we would do well to follow. Chapter number three is a little bit different than chapters one and two.

So far, it's been a conversation between the prophet and God. Chapter number three is a prayer in the form of a song. And, our response to God's answer of I am God should be to worship Him.

Should be to worship Him. That's what Habakkuk does. He doesn't understand. He still doesn't get it. He still does not get it, but he says, God is God and I'm going to worship Him no matter what He does with my life. No matter what He does in my country.

No matter what happens. I'm going to worship God because He's still God no matter what's going on around me. So, he begs God to work in His days in verse number two.

[ 19 : 18 ] O Lord, I've heard thy speech. I've heard your answer and I'm afraid. I was afraid. O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years, make known. In wrath, remember mercy.

He says, God, you're bringing wrath. I want to see your work again, but as you're working in wrath, as you're doing these things, please remember to be merciful. He begged God. Begging God is a form of worshiping Him because you only beg somebody that can give you something.

If you go to other places around the world, you'll see people, they'll probably beg you for something. And that's because they think He can give you something. When we beg God, we realize, I don't have the answers, I don't have the solutions to what's going on around me, so I'm begging Him.

I'm worshiping Him. He's in His holy temple. He is the sovereign King and I need Him to work. And as He's giving out His wrath, as He's giving out justice, I need Him to remember mercy or even I would be consumed.

So we beg Him. And then we behold Him. We see Him for who He is. We allow Him to be who He is. God is not conformed to our image.

[ 20 : 27 ] God is not exactly what we want God to be. When He says, I am God, there are parts of Him being God that we don't like, that don't jive with what we want Him to be.

But as we're listening, as we're asking, as we're standing on the tower and waiting for the answer like Habakkuk, and He gives the answer, and He says He's God and there's parts of God that don't allow me to be what I want to be, that don't allow me to do what I want to do, we accept His answer and realize, I'm wrong.

I behold God, I see God for who He is, and I allow Him to be God. I should allow Him to be God. Habakkuk saw God in all His power. We're not going to read all the verses, but there are some times, especially in the Old Testament, where God, He steps forward, He allows people to see some of who He is, and usually it's terrifying.

When He came to the mountain, Sinai, up to that time, one of the greatest revelations of God, Him giving that great covenant with His nation Israel, giving out the law, giving out a huge portion of His word, what happened?

He came to the mountain, it smoked with fire, there was lightning, there was thundering, and the people said, we don't want to go there and be close to God because we're afraid of Him.

[ 21 : 53 ] Do you know what God said? He says, yeah, don't come close. You're right. There was one person that could go, and when He went, the people didn't even want to be around Him. They didn't want to see Him. God was a little bit scary.

In this book of Habakkuk, it says He goes and the mountains run from Him. The sea asks for mercy. It says, don't destroy me. Creation. That if you go to the ocean and you try to stand in the ocean, even if you're a big man, the wave's going to knock you over.

It doesn't care whether you're there or not. But that sea, that ocean, asks God for mercy. He is mighty and powerful and sometimes terrifying.

If you're not saved, you should be scared of Him. People that don't know Him should be scared of Him because He does have wrath and justice and He is going to punish and there is going to be a payment.

Allow God to be God. When we behold God, we should be humbled even to the point of trembling. After Habakkuk has had this vision, this glimpse of God, I would encourage you to read it in chapter number 3.

[ 23 : 12 ] In verse number 16, He says, When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, rottenness entered into my bones and I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble.

When He cometh up unto the people, He will invade them with His troops. He beholds God. He says, God is God and I'm not. So, you ask God why.

You want to understand. You want to know. When He says something, when He gives you an answer, are you going to accept it or are you going to be the one reproving Him? Are you going to realize He knows everything and I know nothing?

So we behold Him in the last thing. In our worship, we bless Him and realize He is the blessing that we need. These next few verses, I believe, are some of the most beautiful in Scripture.

In Habakkuk 3, verse number 17, it says, Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall the fruit be in the vines. The labor of the olives shall fail and the field shall yield no meat.

[ 24 : 21 ] The flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls. If no one listens, if Israel is still wicked, if He doesn't answer my prayers, if He doesn't give me the blessings that I'm asking for, if I don't prosper, if I'm not successful, if I don't see Him working my life like I want Him to, if the answers to prayer never come, if the fig doesn't blossom, yet, I will rejoice in the Lord.

I will joy in the God of my salvation. Israel was ready to be destroyed. The wall was going to be knocked down. Habakkuk didn't see it like Jeremiah did, but when Jeremiah saw it, he cried.

Habakkuk gets a little bit, he's understanding a little bit what's going to happen and it's bad. But he says, even though all these bad things are going to happen, I am still going to rejoice because I have God.

I will rejoice and I will have joy in the God of my salvation. So, I don't understand why and I don't like that He's allowing the things to happen to me that are happening.

You don't like what He's doing in your life. But, He's God and that's everything. If there are no blessings, if He is, if it seems like He is not even good to me, like He doesn't answer the prayers if He never gives me all the things that we know He's going to give anyways, He's still good enough.

[ 25 : 58 ] I'll still rejoice. Anything He allows to happen to me is a good thing. That's what Romans chapter 8 says.

I don't always like the good thing, the thing that He's allowing into my life, but it's good. He's God. I just have to allow Him to be God.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for being who You are. Help us to accept that. You are beyond us. You are greater than us, mightier than us.

And God, we don't always understand what You're doing. We rarely understand what You're doing. So, we ask You to work. We ask You to be merciful with us because we're slow to understand.

We're slow to follow. So, be merciful. God, help us to rejoice in who You are. Have joy in You, our God, the God of our salvation. I ask all these things in Jesus' name.