

## **Habakkuk: Living With What We Don't Understand**

Series: Major Message from the "Minor Prophets"

July 23, 2017 – Brad Bailey

### **Intro**

We are continuing our summer focus on hearing what God speaks to us from the section of the Bible referred to as The Minor Prophets. The prophets were those God raised up to declare the truth to those around them.[1] The "Minor Prophets" refers to the final twelve books of the Old Testament and the term "minor" refers only to their shorter length ...not their importance.

There is a major message in each of these prophets...which speaks to us today. In these voices we hear how the heart of our God confronts the unfaithfulness of human life...with the reality of consequences and hope.

**Today** we continue with the **Book of Habakkuk...**

Probably the better Hebrew **pronunciation** is "HAB a kuk"...but I am just going to use the common pronunciation ... "Ha BAK kuk"

Habakkuk was, much **like the other prophets, a morally sensitive soul.**

For some time now, he had been **plagued with concern for his city** and his country. **Every day** he saw **injustice played out** on the faces of the worshipers who came to the Temple in Jerusalem. He watched family after family offer their sacrifices with pain, knowing they **bore the weight of ruthless violence...**of those who **exploited the poor** and ruled the city. [2]

**Unique... doesn't speak to the people on behalf of God...but speaks to God on behalf of the people... and what he records is this sacred living Word to us all.**

**Habakkuk 1:1-4 (NIV)**

**<sup>1</sup> The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. <sup>2</sup> How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. <sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.**

The prophet begins with the intensity of one who is seeking to understand...and he is seeking God ...with intensity and honesty. These are not the words of religious ritual...but of real relationship. Real suffering....real confusion...and real questions.

He know that the violent injustice around him is **not what God had intended.**

**God's law, the Torah, was a gift from God for ordering all of Israel's life ... to bring peace with God and one another... and that order is so violated...and the way of life has devolved ...and God has not stopped it.**

**Why?... How long?**

Those words can echo **something familiar in every soul.** Unless you are quite young...you may find they reflect a cry you have known.

There are times we may question minor inconveniences...why raining today... car break down at an inconvenient time. But there are times when there we face not simply inconvenience...but the inconceivable. When there is that which we can't understand how God could allow it.

Why the atrocities of war?

Why ...were **planes allowed to fly into towers** filled with thousands of lives?

Why must a **tsunami** come and wash masses away?

Why **cancer?** ... Why so many **children starving?**

Why do those who dishonor God prosper... while those who honor God suffer?

Why did a dear friend within our community...who is a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, and friend .... suffer a brain aneurism?

There are times when we don't understand how God...who we know to be good and powerful... does not do something. Times when we don't understand. Times when it just isn't fair.

**Some may suggest this is a basis to question belief in God altogether.**

**But the very question presumes there is some basis by which to question...**some reference point out there by which the very idea of something being fair or unfair has meaning.

**A purely naturalistic materialistic world ... might sound good** for you to be free to do your own thing...but it doesn't provide any ultimate moral order or meaning.

For the person who doesn't believe in God, the events of 9/11 was nothing more than a spectacular arrangement of atoms and molecules. [2b]

**But what if one grasps that there is a source...**that life begot life... that there is a God...and they have come into relationship? **Then what?**

**We will find that there is a lot we just can't understand. [3]**

"How long, O Lord, must I call for help?"

**God responds...**

**Habakkuk 1:5-7, 11**

**"Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. <sup>6</sup> I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. <sup>7</sup> They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ...<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."**

God explains that **something will unfold**.... and Habakkuk will see something amazing in his lifetime, so amazing he won't believe it. God's answer is that he will destroy the injustice among his people, the nation of Judah, by bringing the troops of Babylonia to overwhelm them.

What Judah will get is what Judah has selfishly desired and eagerly sought: injustice, violence, division, a relatively godless way of life that is easily drawn to the worship of other gods in place of the God who

brought them out of Egypt and made them his own. And the Babylonians, an immoral and pagan empire, will be the instrument of God's judgment. Babylon...would come against the people.

**Habakkuk can only be stunned...** the Babylonians were known for a brutality greater than any. **Habakkuk knows it.** He even raises that point later. And notably...**God knows it.** God goes on at length to describe the horrible nature of the Babylonian culture. [4]

**Imagine that you see great injustice and moral depravity in our culture...** call out to God...and he says... "I do hear...and I am going to bring consequences"... and just when you begin to find rest knowing that finally things will make sense...God tells you **ISIS will come conquer America...** before themselves being conquered.

**He wanted an answer...he got one...but as for understanding... it is beyond him.**

So he raises even more questions...and waits.

Then we read...

#### **Habakkuk 2:1**

<sup>1</sup> **I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.**

#### **Habakkuk 2:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> **Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. <sup>3</sup> For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. <sup>4</sup> "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith-**

Write it... mark it...declare it. There is something that must be clear. It is certain...it will not prove false.

**Then he begins to declare that he knows what Babylon represents ... "puffed up"...and goes on through the extended text to describe just how offensive they are.**

There is a sense in which **God is saying...** "you think you know how evil their ways are? ....I will give you my version."

God explains that the Babylonians lived by their "need to clothe themselves with glory."

Such a posture **will bring destruction...but will itself ultimately be destroyed.**

As Judah chooses to seek cloth itself with power and glory...it will be destroyed by the same... and then those Babylonians who bring such destruction...will themselves be destroyed.

The tyranny and arrogance of the wicked will not prevail.

**Evil is self-destructive**

**God emphasizes...that the challenge is that it will only come in time...it will linger.**

**God speaks to the challenge of time. He knows we have a problem with the relationship of time and trust.**

But He also speaks to our understanding... **God essentially roots Habakkuk...and us...in the reality of both judgement...and mercy.**

Both are certain. But such a reality...is beyond you to understand.

For our problem is that **we are neither as just nor as merciful.**  
We cry for justice...but not upon ourselves.

God says... **“you will not understand.”**  
This entire exchange is rooted in that reality. We cannot understand.  
**We are the finite** in relationship to the infinite.  
We are bound by a limited perspective.  
We are bound within space and time.

**So where does hope lie?**

God declared the alternative...

**“...but the righteous will live by his faith.” – Habakkuk 2:4 [5]**

**Faith is the power to stay rooted in a larger reality.**  
It is the reality that God will prevail.

Now before exploring how we can live in that light... I want to note...  
**What God does NOT say?...**

**God is not saying...**  
***“Self-righteous people have some spiritual anointing that makes them better.”***

Faith is ultimately not some magic power we have in ourselves...it is the power of staying rooted in the larger reality of God... which we neither control...nor understand... but we TRUST IN.

God does not say...  
***“If you have faith you will have the power to immediately overcome all suffering... in fact such faith provides you earthly riches.... wealth and health.”***

No. Jesus was quite clear...that we will have troubles... bear suffering. Doesn't faith serve the power to engage in healing and miracles? Yes it does...like Jesus... faith is involved with seeing God bring glory in “signs and wonders” of what lies ahead...such signs point to the ultimate future...and allow people to wonder at what God is doing...but faith involves living with what is still being settled.

He also does not say...  
***“If you have faith you will understand.”***

Sometimes the goodness becomes clear within our scope of time...but that is not presumed here. **There are tragedies we simply will not understand.**

**“God does not tell us everything we want to know, but he does tell us everything we need to know.”**

Later in the Bible the Apostle Paul describes how the whole of creation is groaning like a woman in travail, of childbirth, and it's following that that Paul says,

**Romans 8:28 (NIV)**

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

**Notice that Paul tells us what we can know... that God does work good even amidst and through evil...and that is something many of us have seen....but he doesn't say ... we will understand how.**

**Our faith is in that which is beyond understanding.**

This can be **hard for us who live at a time** in which we think we are **so enamored with human knowledge.** We may think we now understand the infinite... heck we even created the word “infinite.”

**But we are finite.**

**Finite means** having a **limited nature** or existence (Merriam-Webster) subject to limitations or conditions, as of space, time, circumstances, or the laws of nature.

Our common problem...is that we are trying to make sense of life ... goodness ...beauty ...order ...love ...within only a partial view of reality and a shortened view of time.

**The truth is: Life bears mystery.** Much of what happens in life is beyond us.

As finite beings...we simply cannot understand everything. It is not a matter of God simply holding out...or hiding...we simply do not bear the capacity of the infinite.

**It's like a parent and child.** A young child may begin to ask “why” to nearly every decision a parent makes... and while a parent can offer some explanation to some decisions... the parent will soon have to say... “TRUST ME.” At some level, the child simply does not have the capacity to understand what is involved.

The distance between your mind and God's mind is vastly, infinitely greater than the distance between a 5-year-old mind and a parent's mind. Yet we tend to expect to understand everything God does.

As Tim Keller notes, To say, “God has to make sense,” makes no sense. To say, “I have to understand God and it has to make sense what he is doing,” makes no sense. In fact, we're worse than a 5-year-old, because in the end, the 5-year-olds generally *do* trust their parents. We're less mature than a 5-year-old if we walk away from God. If we don't trust God, even though sometimes what he says doesn't make sense, we're going to die spiritually and maybe physically.

**God is rooting Habakkuk in the reality of how we as finite creatures must live in relationship to the infinite. [6]**

**So ...**

## **How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?**

### **1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.**

**We find that Habakkuk isn't only focused on what he doesn't understand... he expresses what he DOES understand.**

#### **Habakkuk 3:2a (NIV)**

LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.

Habakkuk realized that though he did not understand God's ways or timing, he could not doubt God's **wisdom, love, or reliability**.

Faith is NOT BLIND. It is not simply "blind trust." It is NOT without reason. It is choosing to trust what I don't understand by what I do understand.

#### **I won't be able to understand the whole of God...but I have a starting point. I know that...**

I exist

I am not the center of the known world

There is that which is beautiful and good... that seems clear to me is beyond what any being in my world has created.

In history there is that which is said to be God revealing Himself... pointing to what He is doing...and marks of fulfillment.

When I open up my mind and heart to such a source...I have personally experienced God working in me...around me.

**> I could go on...but the point is that I don't simply have that which I don't understand...there is that which I can understand.**

### **2. By honesty bound in humility.**

On the one hand, Habakkuk is challenging God. He is asking questions. He is struggling with doubts. These are **some of the rawest words spoken to God in prayer**.

**And don't miss the fact...that God included them in the Bible.**

Yet we hear nothing of Habakkuk threatening God ... he never says, "If you don't change things I will walk away ... I'll stop praying....I'll do my own thing."

**Habakkuk's honesty is not filled by the pride** of one who feels they can **justify their own rebellious choices**. These are not the questions of one who declares that since God hasn't answered them... hasn't provided what they think they deserve...they will declare their freedom to do what they want.

In his honesty...he still refers to God as "... my Holy One ..."  
He is **wrestling faithfully** as he challenges God. [7]

### **3. By patience bound in obedience**

God says, “For the revelation awaits an appointed time ... Though it linger, wait for it.”

God knows the challenge of time.

If you’re waiting for a bus and it doesn’t come and it doesn’t come, and you just go home, you’ve given up. You’re not waiting for it anymore. Wait for it. If you’re in a doctor’s office and you’re waiting and waiting and she doesn’t call for you and you just go home, then that’s that. Or you can wait for it. *Wait* means be patient. *Wait* means don’t give up. Don’t despair.

Now the hardest part in waiting is when you don’t know if the bus is coming at all...or the doctor is still going to see you.

So God says...it will come.

And it’s a call to wait well....to wait actively.

**Waiting is not simply being passive. It means we stay focused on the larger reality.**

How did Habakkuk engage such a time?

### **Habakkuk 2:1**

**I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts...”**

Ramparts is a word that literally **means a tower**.

Why did cities build towers? They built towers so you could see what was coming. See, down in the city or on the ground, there are all sorts of things you can’t see. But in the tower and the higher the tower, the more you can see what’s coming.

This suggests that spiritually...we don’t just look at the problem. You have to put it in the **bigger perspective of all that God has revealed**.

Let me give you an example of going into the tower....into larger realm...of how to wait with perspective. The Apostle Paul... who carried the message of Christ after the resurrection...suffered greatly. He was rejected by his own religious community... imprisoned and beaten by Roman soldiers. And he writes:

### **Romans 8:18 (ESV)**

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

**The word translated “consider”...or I “reckon”... means, “I add it up. I calculate it. I think it out. I work it out in detail.”** He says, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

**Paul had a lot of suffering.** A lot of things went wrong for him. He had physical problems with his eyes. He was persecuted. All kinds of problems. He says, **“I put it in perspective. My sufferings look really big until I compare them to the glory that will be revealed.”** **He is going into the tower. He is looking at the big picture. He is able to wait well...because he has actively engaged developing perspective.**

Waiting on God is not a passive thing. Waiting on the Lord means thinking like that, going into the tower ... forming a larger perspective. And that takes focus. Patience comes from acts of deliberate perspective.

When Habakkuk says he will “**stand his watch**” he is using a military phrase...it refers to one declaring that he will **remain in his post** „,for that is his responsibility.

If you are a sentry on duty, if you're on guard duty, it doesn't matter whether your tired...or not feeling up to it... or your bored. This is Habakkuk's way of showing us that even though he is struggling with God ... he will not leave his post. [8]

#### **4. By value for the changing temporary provisions bound within the greater unchanging eternal gift of God being with us.**

All the good we ultimately long for...is **not simply the temporal circumstances** that will come and go... but the **ultimate good that lies in God**. [9]

There is nothing in the created realm that can satisfy you forever.

There is **no beauty** that will **not fade**.

There is **no love** that will **not face separation**.

All of these are temporal reflections of their source...which is God...and for which in God there is no end.

**The most valuable thing one could ever receive...is that of God giving himself to us.**

**And this lies in Jesus**. [10]

God gives Himself to us. We have a relationship with Him. Keep your eyes on Him and not the things we receive from Him, even when those are good things.

**God gives Himself to us...by Christ... and then by the Spirit that Christ sends to indwell us.**

**We give ourselves to him...and he gives Himself to us.**

That Spirit is a deposit...by which are connected to the future.

***There is joy when we realize we have what cannot be lost. When our hearts relate to our circumstances with gratitude...but are not governed by them.***

This is what we hear in the great conclusion of Habakkuk.

#### **Habakkuk 3:17-19**

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,<sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.<sup>19</sup> The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.

Habakkuk affirmed that even if everything he relied on failed, if everything that gave stability to his life crumbled, still he'd trust the Lord.

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Some of us... we are ready to receive God into our life. I invite you to join me in simply receiving what God has given in Himself. God...we acknowledge that you have come to us... and bore the shane and separation



of our sin...our attempt to be the center. We receive the forgiveness of Christ...and the life of Christ to come fill us and lead us. We receive your Holy Spirit to dwell in us...as a deposit of what is to come.

Now we all...confess our utter finiteness.

Restore in us...the honesty to even acknowledge that we don't understand.

Restore in us...the humility to let go of the demand to understand.

**Resources:** Michael Pasquarello: So what are we waiting for?, Why Does God Do Nothing?

By Timothy J. Keller, John Blanchard; Jones, Nathan E.. 12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets.

**Notes:**

1. These prophets were serving year 800 B.C. to the year 400 B.C. when the last of them, Malachi wrote, some prophesied to the nation of Israel before its exile to Assyria, others to Judah before its exile to Babylon, and some, the last three to Judah after its return from captivity in Babylon. Josiah and good king is killed in battle in 609 BC... and Judah begins to plummet....next kings... "they did evil in the eyes of the Lord" God raises prophets in these years... Jeremiah... Nahum, Zephaniah, and now Habakkuk...about 600BC.

2. Jones, Nathan E.. 12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets (Kindle Locations 3007-3013). Lamb and Lion Ministries. Kindle Edition.

2b. Similarly, most human religious beliefs have no place for such cries. In Buddhism... karma is impersonal...and all suffering is the result of one's ignorance.

3. Such honesty about what we don't understand is found throughout the Psalms, as well as the prophets.

Jeremiah 12:1-17 (NIV)

You are always righteous, O LORD, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?

Ecclesiastes 8:14 (NIV)

There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord in Isaiah 55:8.

Nathan Jones notes, "Intellectually, we have no problem with that statement, but emotions don't always listen to reason. Confusion is a natural human sentiment when faced with our God's sometimes-incomprehensible plans." – From Jones, Nathan E.. 12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets (Kindle Locations 3061-3063).

4. John Blanchard extends the drama of God's response...noting how it begins with the excitement of God finally responding... then declaring He IS going to do something...then adding that it will be within his lifetimes...and then adding it will be so big...and how with each phrase we can imagine how Habbakuk must have grown in anticipation...all setting up the climatic shock of something that he also could not understand as being just.

5. As John Blanchard notes about the wording of this central point:

“The literal translation of his words from the original Hebrew is: 'The righteous one will live by his faithfulness' and the phrase may be deliberately ambiguous. Whose faithfulness is meant? Is it the believer's or God's? The ambiguity may explain why the Septuagint rendered it, 'The righteous one will live by my faithfulness.' If this is what is meant, it takes away nothing of what we have seen in this chapter, as God would be saying to Habakkuk, 'Those who are truly righteous will remain faithful to me because of my faithfulness to them in giving them the grace to remain faithful to me.' Be that as it may, by the time Habakkuk signed off he had passionately embraced the truth of what he had written. At the end of the book the prophet honestly admits that initially the thought of the Chaldean invasion was terrifying: 'I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me' (3:16). Yet he saw beyond the coming terror to the time when the Chaldeans would get their comeuppance. God had promised this by pronouncing five 'Woes' on them (see 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19). Each one of these reflected their sins and all of them culminated in their nation's obliteration by the Persians in 539 bc. Habakkuk would not have known this timetable or precisely how God was to punish Judah's enemies for their sins, but he would 'quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us' (3:16). Then comes Habakkuk's triumphant testimony that faith had overcome his fear. Even if the Chaldeans' invasion of Judah included a scorched earth policy, so that the country's crops would fail and there would be no sheep or cattle left (see 3:17, which lists the sources of the nation's staple foods) nothing would shake his confidence in God. He would still cry, 'I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation' (3:18). But how could he do that if everything around him was falling apart? The answer comes in his final sentence: 'God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places' (3:19). Habakkuk's faith was not in his faith, but in the faithfulness of God, and as Anthony Sevlaggio points out, 'The Bible teaches us that our ultimate destiny is not based on our faithfulness, but rather on his'.”

From: Blanchard, John. Major Points from the Minor Prophets (Kindle Locations 2853-2871). Evangelical Press. Kindle Edition.

“The righteous will live by his faith.” It's so important that it's quoted three times in the New Testament — once in Romans, once in Galatians, and once in Hebrews. It is related to:

- Receiving salvation - Ro 1:16-17
- Persevering - He 10:35-39

Both quote from Hab 2:4

6. As the words a hymn state:

I move in a mysterious way,  
 My wonders to perform.  
 I plant my footsteps in the sea  
 And ride upon the storm.  
 Blind unbelief is sure to err  
 And scan my work in vain;  
 I am mine own interpreter,  
 And I will make it plain.  
 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
 That clouds ye so much dread  
 Are big with mercy and shall break  
 In blessings on your head.

7. Habakkuk reveals a deep faith. As Nathan Joes notes: “He addresses God as My God, My Holy One, My Rock (1:12), showing a personal relationship with the Lord. In other places, he shows familiarity with God’s

works in history (chapter 3), and he rejoices in the God of his salvation (3:18). This is a man who knew the Lord, who trusted Him, and who had great faith. As one commentator summarizes: Through this extended dialogue with Yahweh... we hear Habakkuk's vibrant faith and deep humanity, learning and growing in relation to God. He asks healthy questions (1:2-4) and is persistent in his questioning (1:12-2:1). He is historically grounded in the memory of Israel (3:1-15). He expresses a profound faith in song (3:16-19). His humanity and joy are a model and a challenge." - Jones, Nathan E.. 12 Faith Journeys of the Minor Prophets (Kindle Locations 3080-3088). Lamb and Lion Ministries. Kindle Edition.

8. Another time this is quoted is in Hebrews...written to Jews who were suffering

They were to persevere 'so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay"' (Hebrews 10:36-37). Their problems may have been lasting, but they were not everlasting. The day was coming when they would receive what Jesus had called 'the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matthew 25:34) - and this everlasting era would be ushered in by the Second Coming of Christ.

Yet these promises, however certain, were for the future. What should they do in the meantime, when they were finding the going so difficult? The writer's answer to their unspoken question was to quote Habakkuk: '... but my righteous one shall live by faith' (Hebrews 10:38). Here is a bedrock principle for Christian living, one so fundamental that Christians are said to 'walk by faith, not by sight' (2 Corinthians 5.7).

9. Tim Keller notes:

Habakkuk has often been called a little book of Job. In the book of Job, it starts with Satan coming to God and saying, "Does Job serve God for nothing?"

Satan says to God, "Job looks like he is your servant, but he is not your servant. He looks like he is waiting on you, but he is actually waiting for your things. He looks like he loves you for you yourself, but he actually only loves you for the things he is getting. Look at all the things you have given him. Look at his great family. Look at his money. Look at his fame and success."

Satan says, "Well, I'm going to take them all away. I'm going to take away his family, take away his health, take away his money. Then you'll see he was not loving you for yourself. He was only loving you for the things he was getting. He wasn't waiting on you. He was waiting on things from you. He will curse you." Satan is basically right about us. You know that. Basically when you get started with God, you start to approach God, you first connect to God, you're doing it to get something. You're doing it because you're unhappy. You're doing it because you're guilty or looking for forgiveness. You're looking for things. That's okay, but it had better not stay there.

If somebody loved you or looked like he or she loved you but they were getting an awful lot of benefits out of your connections, they were getting a lot of benefit from their relationship with you, then what happened if something happened to you, and you lost those connections, and those benefits were no longer attached to you? That person just dropped you like a stone. How would you feel?

That question is basically this: "Now we'll find out whether you got into this relationship with me to serve me or to get me to serve you. Now we'll know." If you stick with him and if you learn how to love him no matter what, if you learn to be faithful to him even though you're getting nothing out of it at all, when the darkness lifts, you will find the pressure has turned your heart, that lump of coal, into a diamond.

10. Tim Keller notes: Paul in Acts 13:38, says this amazing statement. He is talking to them. He is preaching the gospel. He is talking about Jesus, and he says, "... God raised him from the dead ... Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses." Okay? Then Paul adds, "Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: 'Look ... and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.'" Paul looks at Habakkuk 1:5, where God says, "I am going to be doing something you'll never believe, something most astounding. I am going to bring salvation out of judgment. I'm going to bring salvation and redemption out of injustice and violence."

Habakkuk says, "I don't understand why you put up with injustice, how you can bring salvation out of injustice if you're holy." God says, "On the cross, that's finally explained."

See, when Habakkuk or you or I say, "Lord, why have you abandoned us," the point is abandonment is not real. God is working. He is working. He is doing things. He is working in spite of the fact that we don't do things right, in spite of the fact we say the bad thing to him, in spite of the fact we don't keep our cool, we don't keep our emotional self-control.

Because on the cross, Jesus was really abandoned. He got the abandonment we deserve so when you're in evil times, you only feel abandoned, but you're not.

– From Tim Keller, sermon: "Why Does God Do Nothing?" May 3, 2009

## Habakkuk: Living With What We Don't Understand

Series: Major Message from the "Minor Prophets"

July 23, 2017 – Brad Bailey

Habakkuk 1:1-3:19

*The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. <sup>2</sup> How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. <sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.*

Habakkuk 1:5-7, 11

*"Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. <sup>6</sup> I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. <sup>7</sup> They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ...<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."*

Habakkuk 2:1

*I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.*

Habakkuk 2:2-4

*<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. <sup>3</sup> For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. <sup>4</sup> "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright-- but the righteous will live by his faith-*

"Faith is the power to stay \_\_\_\_\_ in a \_\_\_\_\_ reality."

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we

\_\_\_\_\_.

*LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD - Habakkuk 3:2a*

.

2. By \_\_\_\_\_ bound in humility.

3. By \_\_\_\_\_ bound in obedience

4. By value for the changing temporary provisions bound within the greater unchanging eternal gift of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

*Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, <sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. <sup>19</sup> The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.*

# MAJOR MESSAGES

— FROM THE  
MINOR  
PROPHETS





НАВАККУК

## Habakkuk 1:1-4

*The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. <sup>2</sup> How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds. <sup>4</sup> Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.*



HABAKKUK



Habakkuk 1:5-7, 11

*"Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. <sup>6</sup> I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. <sup>7</sup> They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ...<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."*

## Habakkuk 2:1

I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.



HABAKKUK

## Habakkuk 2:2-4

<sup>2</sup> Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. <sup>3</sup> For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. <sup>4</sup> "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright –  
- but the righteous will live by his faith.



HABAKKUK



***“...but the righteous will live by his faith.”***

**– Habakkuk 2:4**



**HABAKKUK**

***“...but the righteous will live by his faith.”***

**– Habakkuk 2:4**

***“Faith is the power to stay rooted in a larger reality.”***



**HABAKKUK**

*“The Bible does not tell us everything we want to know,  
but it does tell us everything we need to know.”*



HABAKKUK

Romans 8:28

*“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”*



HABAKKUK





How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

*“LORD, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O LORD.” - Habakkuk 3:2a*



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

2. By honesty bound in humility.



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

2. By honesty bound in humility.

3. By patience bound in obedience



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

2. By honesty bound in humility.

3. By patience bound in obedience

*“For the revelation awaits an appointed time ... Though it linger, wait for it.” – Habakkuk 2:3*



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

2. By honesty bound in humility.

3. By patience bound in obedience

*"I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint."* – Hab. 2:1



HABAKKUK



How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.

2. By honesty bound in humility.

3. By patience bound in obedience

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” - Romans 8:18*



HABAKKUK

How do we live with what we don't understand? ... as those who are finite in relationship to the infinite?

1. By trusting what we don't understand bound within what we do understand.
2. By honesty bound in humility.
3. By patience bound in obedience
4. By value for the changing temporary provisions bound within the greater unchanging eternal gift of God being with us.



HABAKKUK

## Habakkuk 3:17-19

*Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. <sup>19</sup> The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.*



HABAKKUK



НАВАККУК



НАВАККУК

# MAJOR MESSAGES

— FROM THE  
MINOR  
PROPHETS

