

How to Use Sermon Resources

- **READ AHEAD TOGETHER** - MCG's should use the Devotional at the end of this resource as a reading plan for the week leading up to your meeting.
- **SIT UNDER THE WORD** - This resource is filled with scripture references. Read them aloud, together before you answer any questions.
- **APPLY TRUTH** - The goal is deep discussion and application, not necessarily to complete this resource. Don't squash a good discussion. If you get into something important along the way that's fine.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer [2 mins]

Use the Overview [5 mins]

- Cover any key points for people who missed parts or all of the sermon

Scripture Deep Dive [30-40 mins]

- Opening Question
- Read the scripture for each question then ask the question. Some have multiple scriptures.

Close in Prayer

- In this extended prayer time, ask others to pray as they feel led, pray in a circle, pray over one another, pray to your left, or pray for someone specific. Whatever seems best.

Split Time (if applicable)

- Men with men, women with women
- Share in a circle. "What's one thing you want to celebrate? What do you need prayer and accountability for?"
- After everyone shares, pray in a circle for the person to your left/right.

SERMON OVERVIEW

Return: Habakkuk

Sermon Summary:

Drawing from the three chapters of Habakkuk, this sermon traces the prophet's journey from anguished questioning of God's silence in the face of evil, through a hard-won posture of trust, to an ultimate declaration of joy regardless of circumstances. Pastor Matt frames this journey using a diagram of spiritual growth that includes a "crisis of belief" – a pivotal moment in every believer's life where one must decide whether to abandon faith, fake it, or press deeper into an honest relationship with God.

Key Points:

- The book of Habakkuk is a genuine dialogue between the prophet and God, making it unique among the minor prophets, and the name Habakkuk means "to wrestle or to embrace"
- Every believer will likely encounter a "crisis of belief" – a moment where circumstances create a gap between what one expected from God and what one is experiencing – and the response to that crisis shapes one's spiritual trajectory
- God welcomes honest questions but is not obligated to provide answers the questioner is not yet equipped to understand or receive
- The shift from questioning to trusting is reflected in how Habakkuk addresses God in chapter 3 compared to chapter 1, moving from accusation to awe
- Three practical markers of finding joy in God are seen in the text: waiting on God's timeline, offering worship as a declaration that circumstances do not define one's view of God, and continuing to move forward in the work God has called one to do

Scripture Reference:

- Habakkuk 1-3

Stories:

- Pastor Matt recalls Saturday mornings in childhood watching USWA wrestling from Memphis, Tennessee, eating fried bologna sandwiches and drinking Big Red with his father, believing the matches were real – only to have a friend reveal the sport was staged; this story introduces the sermon's theme of what is real versus performed.
- Pastor Matt describes using a hand-drawn diagram to illustrate the arc of spiritual growth, including the moment of salvation, a plateau, a crisis of belief, and the three possible responses: abandoning faith, faking continued devotion, or pressing deeper into honest relationship with God
- Pastor Matt recounts his father visiting when Pastor Matt's firstborn son was about three years old, and gently advising him that he did not need to answer every question his toddler asked because the child could not yet comprehend the answers.
- Pastor Matt uses the image of a toddler learning to walk – leaning on the couch and putting full weight on something stronger than themselves – to illustrate what it means to move from questioning to trusting God, leaning one's full weight on Him rather than relying on one's own understanding

Scripture Deep Dive

Opening Question

1. When have you faced a situation that made you wonder why God seemed silent, and what keeps a question like Habakkuk's from becoming an accusation that assumes God is absent or uncaring?

Point 1: Bring questions to God

2. Read Habakkuk 1:12–13 – After God says he will use Babylon to judge Judah, Habakkuk appeals to God's eternal nature, holiness, and purity. Why does Habakkuk begin his second complaint by naming what he knows to be true about God, and how should that shape the way we pray when God's actions or timing do not make sense? (Compare Psalm 10:1 and Psalm 42:9.)

3. Read Habakkuk 2:1 – Habakkuk states his complaint, takes his position at the watchpost, and waits for God's reply. What is the meaningful difference between waiting for God after honestly praying and merely postponing obedience until God explains everything, and what would faithful waiting require from you in a current uncertainty? (Read also Psalm 27:13–14.)

Point 2: Trust God by faith

4. Read Habakkuk 2:2–4 – God assures Habakkuk that his purposes have an appointed time and then declares, "the righteous one will live by his faith." How does this passage distinguish biblical faith from passive optimism, and what action or response would demonstrate that you are living by faith rather than being ruled by what you can presently see? (Use 2 Corinthians 5:7 for context.)

5. Read Habakkuk 2:20; Romans 1:16–17 – God's declaration that he is in his holy temple comes after he addresses the evil Habakkuk sees, while Romans connects "the righteous will live by faith" to salvation through the gospel. How do God's sovereignty and Christ's saving work give a Christian reason to trust God when justice is delayed, without pretending that evil is acceptable or insignificant? (Also consider Hebrews 10:35–39.)

Point 3: Rejoice in God

6. Read Habakkuk 3:16–19 – Habakkuk describes complete material loss, yet chooses to rejoice in "the God of my salvation" and calls the Lord his strength. What does this passage reveal about the difference between joy that depends on circumstances and joy rooted in God himself, and which area of your life most exposes whether your devotion to God has become conditional? (For further context, read Philippians 4:10–13 and James 1:2–4.)