

Refuge City Church — December 3, 2023
“Faith in the Chaos”: A study in the book of Habakkuk
“Faith-filled Praise” (Habakkuk 3)

Introduction

- From complaint to contentment. From solemnity to song. From pouting to praise!
- Habakkuk releases his complaints & confusion for relief in His trust in the everlasting God.

“Lift up your praise” [verses 1-2]

“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.”

- “Shigionoth” [shiggy-o-no] = type of song; a crescendo [this is a song of praise]
- NOTICE the relinquishing of desired control of the outcome.
 - There is no prayer for the *avoidance* of God’s discipline/judgement.
- **“I have heard of your report”**
 - Do you wait for God’s answer as if you’re unsure who you appealed to?
 - Allow your knowledge of God to affect your response to whatever answer He may give.
 - Stay plugged into His Word and allow His Spirit to *revive* your understanding of the just God we serve.
 - **Psalm 7:1, 8-9**, “O Lord my God, in you do I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers and deliver me... The Lord judges the peoples; judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous— you who test the minds and hearts, O righteous God!”
 - **QUOTE:** “As we pray that the bad may be made good, so we pray that the good may be made better.” [Matthew Henry]
- People pray for revival. Rightly so. But do we pray for our own revival??
 - Pastor David Guzik:
 - Check your *conduct* – does your walk glorify the LORD as it should? How about your private conduct, which only the LORD sees?
 - Check your *conversation* – is your speech profane or impure? Do you talk about Jesus with others?
 - Check your *communion* – are you living a growing, abiding life with Jesus?
 - **CONSIDER:** We *can* pray for individual salvation from our circumstances.
 - As humans, we don’t want to go through pain, trials, and hardships.
 - There is nothing wrong with praying that there be resolution to the issue.
 - **Psalm 46:1**, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

- But we have to do so with proper perspective.
 - **Psalm 46:2-3**, “Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. *Selah*.”
- God may not save from from your circumstance, but He will most definitely be with you & save you in the midst of it.
 - There will be disappointment when we look at our circumstances, but there will always be hope & salvation when we look to God as our source of comfort & provision.
- **“...and of your work”**
 - Pay attention to and remember what God has done for you already!
 - “LORD, HIGH AND HOLY, MEEK AND LOWLY, You hast brought me to the valley of vision, where I live in the depths but see you in the heights; hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold your glory.. Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the wells the brighter thy starts shine; Let me find your light in my darkness, your life in my death, your joy in my sorrow, your grace in my sin, your riches in my poverty, your glory in my valley.” [The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions]
 - In our circumstances, we can always see the Lord at work.
- **“In wrath remember mercy”**
 - People want a life without consequences for their actions.
 - They cry for mercy in their anger and are discontented when things don’t go their way. They want their cake and eat it too.
 - **KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: GRACE** [unmerited favor] is being given something you don’t deserve, while **MERCY** is *not* being given something we do deserve.
 - If we truly sit back and evaluate our life, the sins we commit, do we not deserve punishment? Do we not deserve correction to get us back on the path we need to be on?
 - The question is... how are we going to respond to that discipline?
 - **Hebrews 12:11-13**, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.”

“God on display” [verses 3-15]

- “God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah* His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels.
- In this psalm of praise, we see Habakkuk reflect on the glory and power of God on display as He brought His people out of slavery from Egypt.
 - **Genesis 19:16, 18**, “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain... Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.”

- When the people sinned against God by making the golden calf, God in His mercy sent a plague on them to discipline them. [10 plagues of Egypt]
- As they pressed on from Mt. Sinai, God led his people in glory [a pillar of cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night]; indisputable evidence of the glory of God.
- This is why I pause when there is a beautiful sunrise or sunset. When the clouds are bright and the rays of the sun are shining through.
 - I reflect not on the beauty of creation, but on the glory of God that made it all!
- So in all this, we need to understand that God's glory can and will be shown in various ways; powerful displays of His provision and judgement.

He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.

- God faithfully led his people to the promised land; to which no one was going to get in the way.
 - **Genesis 15:13-15**, "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode. The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia. Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away."
- As we travel through life, we need to understand that our God fights for us where we are, and is already making plans to provide for us where we will go.
 - Be obedient. Be faithful. Remain in a position of praise.

Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters."

- We serve a very personal God who receives us as His children.
 - When we go astray/sin, He disciplines and corrects our actions so that we set our eyes on Him in all we do.
- We serve a very powerful God who is sovereign over all things, and has plan that will not be disrupted by mere man.
 - He controls the wind and the sea. He makes the earth tremble by the power of His glory!
- We must follow. We must be obedient to who we are in Him.
 - This means we will walk through difficult seasons.

- We have to put one foot in front of the other and walk across the sea that He has parted for us.
- We have to fight the battles that have been declared a victory by God beforehand.
- **Romans 8:31, 35**, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”

Conclusion: “Faith-filled Praise” [verses 16-19]

“I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree should 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, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer’s; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.”

- None of us look forward to pain, discipline, or judgement.
 - I remember the times of knowing I was in trouble and all my Mom had to say is, “Wait for your Dad to get home.”
 - We can all look at the world around us and know our land is in trouble, and God may execute His judgement at any moment.
- Yet, let us “wait quietly” [patiently] for the Lord.
 - **Exodus 14:13**, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,”
 - **Ruth 3:18**, “Sit still...until you know how the matter will turn.”
 - **Psalms 46:10**, “Be still and know that I am God.”
 - **Isaiah 30:15**, “In repentance and rest you will be saved, In quietness and trust is your strength.”
- Everything may fall apart... “yet, I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.”
- There may not be a lot of joy and confidence in your circumstances, but you can always find joy and confidence in the Lord.
 - **Mark 14:26**, “And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”
 - Jesus knew what He was going to endure, and yet He sang praise to His Father in Heaven [the Lord’s will is preeminent to our feelings].
 - **Acts 16:23-25**, “And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,”
 - Can you find the will to praise God in the midst of your suffering?
 - Your prayers and praise may be the very thing someone needs to see & hear to place their faith in God.
- By the grace of God, with our faith firmly in Him, He lifts us up!

- **QUOTE:** “God doesn’t always change the circumstances, but He can change us to meet the circumstances.” [Warren Wiersbe]
- That’s how we can live by faith in the midst of chaos.
- That’s how we can rise above our circumstances, with hearts full of faith-filled praise.