

Booklet ~Series, Stand Firm, Pray Fiercely. Praying in Scarcity

Message Outline

Praying in Scarcity, The Story of Habakkuk

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.

Habakkuk 3:16-19

¹⁷ *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,*

¹⁸ *yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

¹⁹ *The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to tread on the heights.*

W_____ do you do W_____ God's W_____ makes no sense?

3 Movements of Prayer:

W_____, R_____, W_____

The G_____ that God P_____ to do for us **may not** be the good we L_____ for the most.

Isaiah 55:8

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

W_____ leads to R_____.

Mark 15:33-34

At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")

R_____ in the fact that God is good because of W_____ he is, A_____ he is

– not as we might W_____ him to be.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

God's S _____, the E _____ we see all around us and the L _____ of God all meet at the cross.

We M _____ go to God in prayer by W _____ and then R _____
– which leads to W _____.

Jesus Christ is more P _____ than all the P _____ and T _____ of this world.

Philippians 3:8

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

Application:

S _____

R _____

T _____

Prayer doesn't change God; it changes us.

Soul Food Day 1

Habakkuk 1:1-11

1 The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received.

*2 How long, LORD, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?*

*Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?*

*3 Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.*

*4 Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.*

*5 "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.*
⁶ *I am raising up the Babylonians,^[a]
 that ruthless and impetuous people,
 who sweep across the whole earth
 to seize dwellings not their own.*
⁷ *They are a feared and dreaded people;
 they are a law to themselves
 and promote their own honor.*
⁸ *Their horses are swifter than leopards,
 fiercer than wolves at dusk.
 Their cavalry gallops headlong;
 their horsemen come from afar.
 They fly like an eagle swooping to devour;*
⁹ *they all come intent on violence.*
*Their hordes^[a] advance like a desert wind
 and gather prisoners like sand.*
¹⁰ *They mock kings
 and scoff at rulers.
 They laugh at all fortified cities;
 by building earthen ramps they capture them.*
¹¹ *Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—
 guilty people, whose own strength is their god.”*

Cancer steals the ones we love. Babies die before they get a chance to live. Police officers are charged with murder. People riot in the streets and burn cities. Christians are beheaded for their faith.

If God is a good God who wants good things for His children, why do bad things happen? Where is the justice?

When devastating circumstances rock our lives, even the most faithful among us can be shaken with doubt. Where is God? Why is He allowing this? Is He really good? Does He even exist?

God is not scared of our questions, and He is not surprised by our doubts.

Even the prophet Habakkuk had doubts and questions for God. In Habakkuk 1:1-4, surrounded by violence, injustice, wrongdoing, destruction, strife and conflict, Habakkuk cries out to God, “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?” (Habakkuk 1:2).

The Lord doesn’t condemn him for asking. He answers and gives him hope. God explains to Habakkuk that He has a plan so amazing that he wouldn’t even believe it (Habakkuk 1:5).

When devastating and confusing circumstances cause us to question God, we can be assured He cares, has a plan, and is working it all together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28). We may not understand because we only see part of the story, but God sees the big picture and has a plan greater than anything we could imagine.

God is working in your life and in our world in ways that if He told us, we would not even believe.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Soul Food Day 2

Habakkuk 1:12-17

¹² *LORD, are you not from everlasting?
My God, my Holy One, you^{ca} will never die.
You, LORD, have appointed them to execute judgment;
you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.*

¹³ *Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?
Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than themselves?*

¹⁴ *You have made people like the fish in the sea,
like the sea creatures that have no ruler.*

¹⁵ *The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks,
he catches them in his net,
he gathers them up in his dragnet;
and so he rejoices and is glad.*

¹⁶ *Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and burns incense to his dragnet,
for by his net he lives in luxury
and enjoys the choicest food.*

¹⁷ *Is he to keep on emptying his net,
destroying nations without mercy?*

It's been a month — maybe two — since it all started going south.

The debt was manageable in the beginning. There was one pile of student loans, the car payments, and the credit card bills you swore were “emergencies.” But then came the car repair bills you weren't expecting, and the tuition bill that was twice what you thought it would be.

The pile got bigger, overwhelming you. You, who didn't deserve this. You, who hadn't done anything wrong. You, who the world was coming down on for really no reason at all.

We've all been there (or a version of there). Habakkuk was there, too.

Habakkuk watched as God set out to punish Israel using the wicked nation of Babylon. He didn't believe Israel deserved such a punishment, yet they were taken by a nation that, in Habakkuk's eyes, deserved it more.

And like many of us, Habakkuk asked God, “Why?”

God's answer likely was not what Habakkuk wanted to hear. While Israel may not have been as wicked as Babylon, they were far from innocent. God sent Babylon against Israel because they needed to experience the consequence for their sin.

Not everything that happens in our lives is a punishment for something we've done. But sometimes, if we're honest with ourselves, the circumstances we face are the result of our own bad decisions.

God loves us the way a perfect father does. He wants good things for His children. And sometimes, the most loving thing a father can do is allow us to experience the consequences of our actions so we'll turn away from a life that's not good.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?

3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Soul Food Day 3

Habakkuk 2:1

*¹I 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.*

Today, banks make it pretty easy to order a new debit or credit card when yours has been compromised or lost. Back in the day, people had to go into the bank to get a new card. These days, one phone call and it's headed straight for your mailbox.

But what if, after ordering the new card, you sat in your house day after day and stared out of the window at your mailbox, wondering where your card was but never bothering to go check it? Or, maybe you got too busy to stop and check the mailbox, so you just continued to rush past it every day. Obviously, you would not get your card. You wouldn't even know if the card was ever there.

That may seem like a silly response to a pressing matter, but so many of us do that with God. We are quick to ask God for answers, but do we put ourselves in a position to receive them? We live in a fast-paced, instant gratification driven world where a slow answer often means no answer. If we don't receive immediate answers, we jump to the next solution or try to figure things out on our own.

The prophet Habakkuk asked God questions then put himself in the best position possible to hear God's answer. Not only did he position himself to hear, he waited. He waited in expectation (Habakkuk 2:1).

God hears every prayer, and answers them how He sees fit. Not how we see fit. Sometimes we have to wait for direction, but waiting is not the same as doing nothing. To wait with expectation is to continue seeking God believing He hears us and has something to say.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?

Soul Food Day 4

Habakkuk 2:4-14

*⁴"See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness^[a]—*

*⁵indeed, wine betrays him;
he is arrogant and never at rest.
Because he is as greedy as the grave
and like death is never satisfied,
he gathers to himself all the nations
and takes captive all the peoples.*

⁶"Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying,

*“Woe to him who piles up stolen goods
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
How long must this go on?”*

*⁷ Will not your creditors suddenly arise?
Will they not wake up and make you tremble?
Then you will become their prey.*

*⁸ Because you have plundered many nations,
the peoples who are left will plunder you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.*

*⁹ “Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain,
setting his nest on high
to escape the clutches of ruin!*

*¹⁰ You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.*

*¹¹ The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.*

*¹² “Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and establishes a town by injustice!*

*¹³ Has not the LORD Almighty determined
that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire,
that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?*

*¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

You pull into the dump with your final load of trash. The cleanup was a success, and you are ready to bask in the neatness of your newly-organized garage. But as you leave, you notice the rusted remnants of a gas grill, decayed fragments of some outdoor furniture, and a tattered old couch among the dumpsters.

The piles of discarded goods provide a tangible reminder of the temporary nature of life on earth. Like us, Babylon lived in an age of prosperity and excess. People lusted after what was newer, bigger, and better. But none of what they built still stands.

In Habakkuk 2, God spoke through the prophet Habakkuk to warn Babylon that He was not pleased with their obsession with money and material possessions. Habakkuk chastises Babylon for the way they built their wealth. Their desires were not upright. They obtained their wealth through greed, arrogance, extortion, and bloodshed. Their house was built through unjust gain and filled with stolen goods.

Habakkuk warns the Babylonians that, like the worn out items at the dump, their earthly possessions will eventually decay. A life built on materialism will not last. But a life built around a relationship with Jesus will last into eternity.

“The righteous will live by faithfulness,” Habakkuk writes, and one day “... the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord” (Habakkuk 2:4 and Habakkuk 2:14).

On that day, we will all give an account for what we built our lives on. Like the nations of Habakkuk’s day, we have a choice: We can build our lives on a relationship with Jesus, or we can build our lives on acquiring stuff and making money. But only one will last into eternity.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
 2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
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Soul Food Day 5

Habakkuk 2:14-20

¹⁴ *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.*

¹⁵ *“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors,
pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk,
so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!*

¹⁶ *You will be filled with shame instead of glory.
Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed^[a]!
The cup from the LORD’s right hand is coming around to you,
and disgrace will cover your glory.*

¹⁷ *The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
and your destruction of animals will terrify you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.*

¹⁸ *“Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman?
Or an image that teaches lies?
For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation;
he makes idols that cannot speak.*

¹⁹ *Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’
Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’
Can it give guidance?
It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it.”*

²⁰ *The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him.*

Have you ever pulled into your parking spot at work or school and realized you can’t remember a single moment of the drive? When we see and do the same things every day, it’s easy to go into autopilot.

As our familiarity with our surroundings increases, our awareness of their specialness decreases. This is true, not just in our morning commutes, but in our spiritual lives as well. In Habakkuk 2:14, God describes a time when the earth will be shaken out of autopilot and filled with an awareness of His glory.

The world wasn’t lacking examples of God’s glory. God’s glory was all around Israel, just like it’s all around us. Everything we find beautiful in nature — from the mountains to the beach — was made by God and points to how magnificent He is. The problem was a lack of awe for the God who made everything they depended on.

Taking for granted the God who made the wood, the people started making their own gods. And while we don’t see a lot of wooden idols today, we aren’t that different from the people God was warning when He said, “How foolish to trust in your own creation— a god that can’t even talk!” (Habakkuk 2:18).

When we allow anything other than God to capture our awe, we’ve made an idol. Idols aren’t just statues. Idols take all forms — the need for acceptance, the love of money, the identity we find in roles at work or at home.

Removing idols from our lives doesn’t have to take the destruction of nations. Rediscovering our awe starts with the choice to give God credit and honor for all that we are, all that we have and all that we can do.

No matter how many steps we’ve taken from God, He hasn’t moved. God is still in His holy temple displaying His glory (Habakkuk 2:20). We just have to stop long enough to see it.

Application

1. What did you hear? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?

2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged?
 3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
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houseChurch Material

Have different readers share the verse from 2 or more translations

Reflect between each reading

Habakkuk 3:3-19

- ³ *God came from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.^[b]
His glory covered the heavens
and his praise filled the earth.*
- ⁴ *His splendor was like the sunrise;
rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.*
- ⁵ *Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.*
- ⁶ *He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations tremble.
The ancient mountains crumbled
and the age-old hills collapsed—
but he marches on forever.*
- ⁷ *I saw the tents of Cushan in distress,
the dwellings of Midian in anguish.*
- ⁸ *Were you angry with the rivers, LORD?
Was your wrath against the streams?
Did you rage against the sea
when you rode your horses
and your chariots to victory?*
- ⁹ *You uncovered your bow,
you called for many arrows.
You split the earth with rivers;*
- ¹⁰ *the mountains saw you and writhed.
Torrents of water swept by;
the deep roared
and lifted its waves on high.*
- ¹¹ *Sun and moon stood still in the heavens
at the glint of your flying arrows,
at the lightning of your flashing spear.*
- ¹² *In wrath you strode through the earth
and in anger you threshed the nations.*
- ¹³ *You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.
You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness,
you stripped him from head to foot.*
- ¹⁴ *With his own spear you pierced his head
when his warriors stormed out to scatter us,
gloating as though about to devour
the wretched who were in hiding.*

¹⁵ *You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters.*

¹⁶ *I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.*

¹⁷ *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,*

¹⁸ *yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.*

¹⁹ *The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to tread on the heights.*

Application

1. What did you hear during the reading? What did the Holy Spirit say to you?
2. What do you think and how do you feel about what the Holy Spirit said? How do you feel comforted, convicted and challenged from the reading?
3. What does the Holy Spirit want you to do now?
4. Share any of the above discoveries with your houseChurch. Ask each other, "What is your nugget?"

Discussion Questions

1. What is a current challenge in your life that requires faith?
2. British preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said: "The Christian faith is based solidly on facts, not ideas. Its doctrines are based upon these facts. Buddhism and Hinduism rest on theories and ideas." Discuss the facts that Habakkuk lists as he remembers the history of Israel and the world. Discuss the amazing acts of God in your own life.
3. Name a hymn or praise song that helps you to rejoice when you remember God's faithfulness and goodness to you in the past, and describe why.

Now talk to Jesus