

## SPECIAL SERMON

### ***"Though the Fig Tree Should Not Blossom"***

#### INTRODUCTION

- The book of Habakkuk focuses on Habakkuk's internal struggle to understand the ways of God.
- Habakkuk's First Complaint (1:2-4). He didn't understand why God was allowing evil to continue unrestrained. He also didn't understand why God didn't appear to be answering Habakkuk's prayers.

#### TRUTH #1: GOD'S WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS (1:1-2:4)

- **1:6-11**: God answers Habakkuk by saying that God will send the Babylonians to bring judgment upon Israel.
- Habakkuk moves from a state of spiritual perplexity to *an even greater state of spiritual perplexity*.
- Habakkuk's Second Complaint (1:12-2:1): How can a holy God use an unholy people like the Babylonians to judge His people?
- **God's answer (2:4) – the righteous shall live by faith.**

"The kind of faith that Habakkuk describes and the New Testament authors promote is continuing trust in God and clinging to God's promises even in the darkest days." (ESV Study Bible)

#### TRUTH #2: GOD'S PURPOSES WILL ALWAYS PREVAIL (2:5-20)

- God is going to judge Israel for their violence, and ***then He is going to judge the Babylonians for their violence.***
- **2:14** - God assures his prophet that wickedness will be defeated and His purposes will prevail.
- **2:20** - There is a time for questions to cease and to be simply silent before the Lord.

"Silence is the only possible response in the face of God's holiness and the coming judgment. . . We honor God when we are in awe of him. We. . . bring him glory in our humble silence." (William Ross)

#### TRUTH #3: GOD'S PRESENCE IS BETTER THAN EARTHLY BLESSINGS (3:1-19)

- **3:1** – This is the third time that Habakkuk speaks in the book. In contrast to the first two times he has spoken, in **chapter 3**, there is **no more questioning**.
  - The language moves from "*Why*" and "*How long*" (chapter 1) to "*You . . . You . . . You*" (3:12-15).
  - Habakkuk recounts the great acts of God recorded in redemptive history which includes deliverance from bondage to Egypt (3:3-16)
- **3:17-19**: Habakkuk moves from *questioning* to *trusting*, from *complaining* to *rejoicing*, even though nothing in his circumstances has changed.
  - **Verse 17**: The Babylonian invasion will wipe out all ***earthly luxuries*** (figs and fruit), all ***earthly necessities*** (produce and food), and all ***earthly riches*** (flocks and herd).
  - **Verse 19**: Habakkuk uses the term the "Lord GOD" (verse 19) – "Yahweh Adonai" which also can be translated "Sovereign LORD".
  - **Verse 19**: **he makes my feet like the deer's**: surefooted, bounding up difficult terrain.

# Sermon Application Questions

November 3, 2019

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

1

Pastor Dan told the story of when he was a young believer and his friend passed away unexpectedly and suddenly. His heart was filled with questions such as: "God, why are you doing this?" "I don't understand what You are doing." "God why are you not answering my prayers?"

Have you ever been in a situation where you struggled to understand God's ways? How does the message of Habakkuk speak to your situation?

2

Habakkuk was told that God was going to use the Babylonians to judge God's people Israel. Why would this have been difficult for Habakkuk to understand? See **1:7-11** for a description of the Babylonians.

God can use even evil nations and evil people to accomplish His good and holy purposes. How does this truth inform the way that we view evil in the world around us?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week's sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

### **Isaiah 55:8-9**

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### **Romans 11:33-34**

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"

### **Psalms 22:27**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

### **Isaiah 11:9**

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

### **Job 40:3-5**

Then Job answered the LORD and said: "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."

### **Psalms 63:3-7**

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.

**Read Habakkuk 3:1-19.** What are some of the characteristics of God that are highlighted in this prayer?

2 How does the focus of Habakkuk's prayer in chapter 3 contrast with his statements in chapter 1?

**Evaluate your own prayer life.** How often do you simply focus on praising God for *who He is* and adoring Him for His glorious character? How can you renew your focus on praise this week?

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

Habakkuk experienced a heart transformation even though his earthly circumstances remained the same.

1 What causes you to lose your joy? Is it an earthly relationship, a financial trial or a physical challenge?

Read **Habakkuk 3:17-19** and consider writing a prayer that expresses surrender of this earthly blessing to the LORD.

Habakkuk expresses that his feet will be made **“like the deer’s” (v.19)**: surefooted and filled with energy through the difficult terrain of life.

2 What is the “difficult terrain” that God is calling you to walk through today?

How does the life of Habakkuk encourage you to persevere in your circumstances today?