

HABAKKUK 3:1-19 – A PROPHET’S PRAYER; A HYMN OF FAITH

8/29/15 Sat Morn Prayer – ptwente@gmail.com

Biblical Background: -

- Habakkuk came after Josiah. Maybe a contemporary of Isaiah and of a younger Jeremiah. Babylonians had become a great power or close to it.
- Habakkuk begins by asking two questions: How long? Why? (Sound familiar to us?)
- HABAKKUK complains 1) about the wickedness of Judah; 2) about God doing nothing about it.
- God answers v.5– Watch, be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe if I told you!
- God is going to use Babylon to judge Judah!
- Vs. 12-17 Now Habakkuk complains the second time. He is shocked! He says no, no! We’re bad, but they’re worse! But are we really better than the world when we backslide? We sin against a better light! More complaints against the answer than against the first complaint!
- Now in chap 2 to his credit, he knows he is going to get corrected. He’s going to his tower and wait.
- The Lord then responds by telling Habakkuk to write the vision. It’s set in stone, so to speak. I’m going to judge Judah by using Babylon, then, I’m going to judge Babylon.
- V.3 is for an appointed time (Habakkuk’s time).

The Prayer of Habakkuk:

1. SEEKING REVIVAL FROM THE GOD OF ALL POWER

A Plea for Revival (vs. 1-2):

Hab 3:1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

Hab 3:2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech and was afraid;

- *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:* The first two chapters of Habakkuk give us the prophet’s question and answer time with God. Now that God has answered Habakkuk, the prophet brings a prayer to close the book.

O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!

- *O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years* - Habakkuk simply prays for *revival*. He knows how God once worked and how His people once responded, and Habakkuk wants to see that again.
- The prayer of Habakkuk shows us that revival is a work of God, not the achievement of man. There is something man can and must do for revival - simply cry out to God and plead for His reviving work.
- Notice the prayer: *revive Your work*. Often, my prayer is really *revive my work*, but I must have a heart and mind for God’s work, far bigger than my portion of it. Shake off all the bitterness of everything that has to do with self, or with party, and now pray, Lord, revive thy work, and if thy work happen to be more in one branch of the church than in another, Lord, give that the most reviving. Give us all the blessing, but do let thine own purposes be accomplished, and thine own glory come of it, and we shall be well content, though we should be forgotten and unknown. (Spurgeon)
- At the same time, this must be a *personal* prayer: LORD, revive *me*. We too often blame the church for sin, corruption, laziness, prayerlessness, lack of spiritual power, or whatever - and we forget that *we are the church*. Pray for personal revival and diligently search yourself:
 - 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?

In the midst of the years make it known;

- *In the midst of the years make it known* - Habakkuk longs for God to do a work that is *evident* to everyone as a work of God. He prays that revival would be *known* at a definite *time and place* (*in the midst of the years*), not just as an idea in someone’s head.

In wrath remember mercy.

- *In wrath remember mercy* - Habakkuk prays knowing well that they don’t *deserve* revival, so he prays for *mercy*. The idea is, LORD, I know that we deserve your *wrath*, but in the midst of your *wrath remember mercy* and send revival among us.
- O God, have mercy upon thy poor church, and visit her, and revive her. She has but a little strength; she has desired to keep thy word; oh, refresh her; restore to her thy power, and give her yet to be great in this land. (Spurgeon)

The Power of God on Behalf of His People (vs. 3-15):

Hab 3:3 God came from Teman, The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, And the earth was full of His praise.

- As Habakkuk prays for revival he begins to praise the God who brings revival. In this song of praise (punctuated by several expressions of *Selah*, as in the Psalms) Habakkuk glorifies the power and majesty of God. **Do you include praise and thanksgiving to God for His past and ongoing faithfulness in your prayers?**
- It is good to praise God like this, and Gods people need to do more of it. It is good to praise God because . . .
 - Because it **gives appropriate honor and glory to God**; it **declares Gods specific works**; it **teaches and reminds us of who God is and what He has done**; it **places man in proper perspective under God**; it **builds confidence in the power and works of God**

Hab 3:4 His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, And there His power was hidden.

Hab 3:5 Before Him went pestilence, And fever followed at His feet.

Hab 3:6 He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, The perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting.

Hab 3:7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

Hab 3:8 O LORD, were You displeased with the rivers, Was Your anger against the rivers, Was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?

Hab 3:9 Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah. You divided the earth with rivers.

Hab 3:10 The mountains saw You and trembled; The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, And lifted its hands on high.

Hab 3:11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; At the light of Your arrows they went, At the shining of Your glittering spear.

Hab 3:12 You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger.

Hab 3:13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For salvation with Your Anointed.

- *You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed:* As Habakkuk remembers how God has saved in the past, it makes him full of faith for what God can do right now and in the future. He also declares that salvation is brought *with Your Anointed* - and the LORDs anointed is none other than the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

You struck the head from the house of the wicked, By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

Hab 3:14 You thrust through with his own arrows The head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.

Hab 3:15 You walked through the sea with Your horses, Through the heap of great waters.

2. THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROPHET'S FAITH:

Knowing Gods strength, Habakkuk can trust the LORD even in a crisis (vs. 16-18).

Hab 3:16 When I heard, my body trembled; My lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones; And I trembled in myself, That I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops.

Hab 3:17 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—

Hab 3:18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

- *When I heard, my body trembled:* Habakkuk shows the proper response of man under the sovereign power of God. He recognizes his own weakness and low standing before this God of all majesty and power.
- *He will invade him with his troops:* The prophet remembers that the Babylonians are coming, and that this God of sovereign power and majesty is directing their work against Judah.
- *Though the fig tree may not blossom, not fruit be on the vines . . . yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation:* In almost a vision, Habakkuk sees the Judean countryside desolate, perhaps from the invading Babylonian army or perhaps from natural calamity. In the midst of this almost complete loss, Habakkuk can still *rejoice in the LORD*.
- He knows that this God of majesty and power is not *diminished* because man faces difficult trials. Sometimes we think, If God is so great and powerful, how come I am going through a hard time? Habakkuk knew this was the wrong question and the wrong attitude. Instead, he says: I know you are strong and mighty, and if we are in desolate circumstances it is because we deserve it. I will praise You still, and even rejoice in You.

- **Rejoice in the LORD . . . joy in the God of my salvation:** With desolate circumstances like he just described, Habakkuk can find no joy in the *fig tree* or in the *vines* or in the *fields* or *flock*; yet God is unchanged. He can still **rejoice in the LORD**, because He is unchanging.
- Habakkuk didn't just practice positive thinking and shut out the idea of the barren fig tree and the empty cattle stalls. Instead, he saw those problems for what they were and remembered that God was greater than them all.

Knowing Gods strength, Habakkuk can trust God for strength. (v. 19)

Hab 3:19 The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

- **The LORD God is my strength:** Habakkuk can only properly pray this after he prayed the prayer of faith in the previous verses. He rightly declared that his strength was *not* in fig trees or vines or fields or flocks, but only in the **LORD God**.
- We might even say that *what we praise is our strength*. If by his words, life, or heart a man lives to praise his own achievements and resources, that those are his *strength*. If by words, life, or heart one praises a person or an idea, then those are his *strength*. We demonstrate that the **LORD God** is our *strength* when we praise Him.
- **He will make my feet like deer's feet:** Habakkuk thought of the deer running about on the *high hills*, never losing a step and never falling. More than that, the deer positively dance and leap on the hills - they are full of life and joy. So the prophet declares, God will set my steps that firmly and lively also. As I trust in Him, He will not allow me to slip or fall, and I will do more than merely plod along - I will skip about with life and joy.

SUMMARY:

- **Habakkuk prays.** He trembles at what the situation is and what will happen.
- **He reviews God's faithfulness** - God is requiring faith, but not blind faith, faith based on the proven faithfulness of God.
- **Habakkuk praises the Lord** for His goodness and joys in the God of my salvation.
- **Habakkuk rejoices** - jumps up and down, spins around because of the salvation of the Lord.
- **He has peace that surpasses understanding!**
- **He is and will live by faith!** He acknowledges God's sovereignty over all outcomes. God is in control. He will establish His righteous kingdom in the end. In that day, all wrongs will be made right! The wicked will be judged for their sinfulness and the righteous will be saved. We believers look forward to this day with great joy!!!

I've Got the Joy In My Heart!

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart/Where?/Down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart!

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart/Where?/Down in my heart to stay

Refrain: And I'm so happy/So very happy/I've got the love of Jesus in my heart

And I'm so happy/So very happy/I've got the love of Jesus in my heart.

I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart!

I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart to stay.

Refrain:

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart/Where?/Down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart!

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart/Where?/Down in my heart!/Down in my heart to stay

Refrain:

I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart!

I've got the peace that passes understanding down in my heart! Where?/Down in my heart to stay.

Refrain: (2x)

SAT MORN PRAYER GUIDELINES:

We all want to receive **instruction from the teaching in Biblical prayers** and for the prayer time be effective, being led by the **Holy Spirit**. To that end:

- Please be on time at 6:30am to receive the blessings of the weekly prayers in the Bible.
- If you are late, **simply agree in prayer and refrain from praying** in group prayer and **wait until the small group** prayer time.
- Those who pray aloud during the prayer meeting portion, **please keep the prayers short (2-3 minutes)** praying as led by the Holy Spirit. There is only about a 30 minute period for 15 or so to pray.
- **Intercessory prayer** (church, country, leaders) **during group time**; **personal** prayer during small group time.
- **Welcome times of silence** during the group prayer time as we wait on the Holy Spirit.