

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 14TH, 2019 // BOOK OF HABAKKUK

## WORSHIP (3:1-2)

Habakkuk ends his prophecy with a prayer that's actually a doxology, a hymn, or a song.

- The word, "Shigionoth" is a musical term that indicates the tone or mood in which the prayer was intended to be sung in ancient Israelite Temple worship.
- This 3rd chapter actually became a prayer hymn sung by the people of Israel in worship.

The act of singing to God is something that people are commanded to do all through the Scriptures (400 references to singing & 50 direct commands to sing).

### SINGING IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT:

1. Helps us to engage with words, concepts, and ideas emotionally & physically.
2. Helps us remember concepts/verbalize prayers.
3. Humbles us and helps us demonstrate unity.

When we get over our pride (and forget looking/sounding silly) and pour ourselves out to God through singing with our voices and engaging God fully with our minds- we commune with God in deep, rich ways. Often we think of prayer as just asking God for things, but here Habakkuk offers only two petitions in his entire prayer- most of his prayer is centered on praising God.

Habakkuk begins his prayer by saying to God, "I've heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear..." (vs. 2)

- He's recounting to himself God's greatness exhibited by past mighty deeds.
- In spite of the terrifying judgment that's coming, Habakkuk praises God for His wondrous acts and all the things God had done in the past. We can get so spiritually near-sighted.

But then he prays for God to "revive it" & "make it known" in the midst of the years.

- He's remembering the faithfulness and power of God, and calling on Him to do it again.
- Habakkuk had heard of God's wonders, but he longed to see them with his own eyes.
- We should not be content just to hear of the greatness of God; we should desire to have a personal encounter with Him.

## A COLD & BROKEN HALLELUJAH

- Praising God in times of great sorrow is sometimes the last thing we want to do.
- But when we choose to lift our eyes towards God and praise Him in spite of all that we don't understand, our perspective changes.
- The most effective, powerful worship you can ever offer to God is when you're at your lowest.

## A REPUTATION OF FAITHFULNESS (3:3-15)

The proper focus of worship must always be on God, but what is the true God like?

- In verses 3-15, Habakkuk presented several characteristics of God through all of His appearances and mighty acts in the history of Israel.
- What Habakkuk is saying is, "God, we're in a difficult situation right now, but I'm not going to forget who you are and what you've done!"

## GOD'S APPEARANCE AT MT. SINAI (3:3A)

Deuteronomy 33:2 indicates that Mt. Paran is another name for Mt. Sinai, which is the place where God gave the people of Israel the law.

- Habakkuk is reminding himself as he prays to God that God showed His love for His people by giving them instructions on how to live and follow His commands.
- God has spoken to us through His Word!

## GOD'S APPEARANCE IN ALL CREATION (3:3B-4)

Habakkuk then reflects on God's glory that came about as a result of His appearance to Israel throughout history.

- God's splendor is compared to a sunrise, and the "rays" that he mentions are a reference to the face of Moses that was lit up by God's glory after he descended from Mt. Sinai.
- Even the residual effects of God's glory are glorious!
- God's appearance in the plagues of Egypt (3:5)

Habakkuk then reflects on all God that did to save Israel from the bondage and slavery of the Egyptians as He sent pestilence and plagues.

- Israel had been in hopeless situations before, but God had been faithful and delivered them in miraculous ways.

- Sometimes we're quick to forget that the same God who rescued us before can do it again.

## GOD'S APPEARANCE BEFORE THE NATIONS (3:6)

After God's judgment upon Egypt, the nations of the earth were frightened senseless of the approach of the Lord.

- His presence was so real and so powerful as He went before the people of Israel as they traveled into the promised land, that even the "mountains were scattered" and "hills sank low"- this is poetic metaphor to describe God's presence.

## GOD'S APPEARANCE IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES (3:7)

"Cushan" is a shortened form of the name, "Cushan-Rishathaim" (Judges 3:8-11), who was the 1st oppressor to rise against Israel in the promised land.

- God raised up Othniel to deliver Israel from Cushan, and God raised up Gideon to deliver Israel from Midian.
- Even in Israel's wickedness, God still showed grace.
- God's wrath on all wickedness (3:8-15)

Habakkuk now speaks of God's wrath that is focused on wickedness and executed for the sake of "the salvation of your people" (vs. 13).

- In other words, He's affirming that God's judgment on Judah, even though it will be horrifying, is actually a good thing in the long run.
- God's discipline is never pleasant- but it produces things in us that are priceless.

In this moment of fear, tension, and pain, Habakkuk is growing in His trust in God.

- It's in the moments of tension, pain, and discomfort that real growth can happen in us.
- We can't grow into the people God wants us to be if we never walk through tough times.
- Sometimes the seasons of dryness, pain, and confusion are gifts from God to grow our trust, our faith, and our character.

## THOUGH THE FIG TREE SHOULD NOT BLOSSOM... (3:16-19)

The coming invasion of Judah was terrifying to Habakkuk. He tells us very bluntly what his physical symptoms are: a trembling body, quivering lips, unsteady legs, and a "rotteness" in his bones (vs. 16). This is not a picture of a super saint that felt no fear or pain- he's a real person that feels the full weight of what's about to happen.

And yet, he says that he'll "wait quietly for the day of trouble".

- Even though he does not enjoy the future that he and Judah must face, Habakkuk has full confidence that God is in charge and he can rest in that truth.
- Habakkuk knows the character of a loving God that cared deeply for His people, His promises, and His covenant.

In vs. 17 Habakkuk states that even if he lost everything he owned and every bit of Judah's well-being went away, he'd still be O.K.

- Sometimes faith means handing over the end results to Him and choosing to trust, worship and walk with Him even in the midst of losing absolutely everything.
- How would you respond if you lost absolutely everything? What's your hope in?

Habakkuk states that even if he lost absolutely everything, he will still rejoice and take joy in the God of his salvation.

- God is his strength (vs. 19) who makes his feet "like the deer's".
- A deer can run quickly through dark, treacherous, and even hilly environments- in other words, God gives us the ability to thrive even in the worst of situations.

It is God who makes Habakkuk able to tread on "my high places" (vs. 19).

- High places in ancient times were places of protection and refuge.
- The high places God may lead us to in our lives aren't always changes of situation or circumstance- the high places may be that our perspective gets changed and our faith is grown.

The "high places" God leads us to may even emerge out of tragedies, heartache, or losing absolutely everything.

## THE QUESTION WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES IS THIS-

"Am I willing to allow God to work in my life to walk me up into the high places- new places in my relationship with Him, new levels of trust, new faith, new perspective, and a new renewed appreciation for His faithfulness and love?" Are we willing to worship, praise and thank God even in the midst of our pain and sorrow? Have we become spiritually near-sighted? Or are we willing to reflect on God's faithfulness in our lives and remember what He's done for us? What if you lost everything? Is your hope so firmly grounded in God that you know you'd be O.K.?