

## *HABAKKUK CHAPTER 1 - LAURIE TACKETT - JULY 21, 2020*

You might recall in CS Lewis' book *The Horse and His Boy*, a scene with the main character, Shasta, as he is walking along the road towards Narnia, feeling very sorry for himself. Unknown to him, Aslan, the great king, symbolic of Christ, comes alongside and invites him to "tell me your sorrows." Aslan tells him, "I do not call you unfortunate." Shasta discovers that it was actually Aslan who ordered all of the bitter providences in his story for his good. Habakkuk probably feels a bit like Shasta and maybe you do, too.

Hab 1:1- an oracle is a burden or literally a vision, usually of a prophetic judgment.

Hab 1:2-4 Habakkuk pours out his complaint to God. He uses very strong language and accuses God of seeing his distress and refusing to help. He seems to feel that God is like a lifeguard - fully equipped and trained - who watches a swimmer in distress as he drowns and does nothing.

We may have a tendency to pour out our complaints/frustrations to everyone around us - and there is a time to do this - there is wisdom in many counselors in the Body of Christ -

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

But - it is more important that we take our complaints to God. He not only allows this but welcomes it. Habakkuk does indeed take his complaint to God, so this is the wisdom for us.

Habakkuk 5:11—God Responds. He says, Actually, I am doing something - look at the nations and be astounded - I am working in a way you are not going to believe.

It is our tendency to interpret being "astounded" to mean that it is going to be a party but actually God means we'll be astounded at not a party but a war because the work He is doing is going to be through suffering using the Babylonians (Chaldeans). He knows exactly what He is doing and how He is going to do it, so He tells Habakkuk to get ready. It will be great, but will come differently than expected.

### **SO—How can we apply this to our lives?**

1. Identify your complaint/burden in your life. Where do you feel God is silent in your current experience or in your desired reality?
2. Recognize that all of creation is groaning (Romans 8:22)—it is not just coronavirus - all of creation is fallen and feeling this tension between what is desired and what is being experienced now.
3. Also note that it is so easy to fall into an imagined or a false oracle - fearing a potentially dreadful future that has not happened - and is a fear that God is not giving to you. The enemy lies, distorts, and creates chaos and confusion.

(Recall the way that evil Sauren distorted the future for those who peered into the crystal ball in *Lord of the Rings*....)

## What does the Word tell us?

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

One way we can manage such fears when they arise is to go to a trusted person—your husband, a mentor, a parent, etc. and ask, is this a legitimate concern? If it is a cause to be concerned, then you go to the Lord in prayer and trust Him. But if it is not, then you take every thought captive (2 Cor 10:5) and give this to Him, live in today, and trust Him. Refuse to allow yourself to be spun up.

Paul Miller wrote a book called *A Praying Life* - his experience in learning to pray as a result of his life raising a special needs child. It is a very insightful book. He shares some helpful graphics that explain ways we can deal with the difference between our hopes and our reality.

There is a difference between what we hope and what we actually experience and this tension is uncomfortable. There are several UN-Biblical ways we might deal with it.

- Denial. We raise our reality upwards towards our hope and pretend that it is not so bad. We might say, "I can't even deal with this." We may choose to ignore it or find an escape such as shopping, etc.
- Determination. We try to forcefully raise our reality towards our hope through self-effort. This is not accepting God's will but rather fighting against it. It is not the same as entering into brokenness and taking a Biblical call to action—this is stepping in and trying to control a situation that we should not try to control. We are kicking against the wall.
- Despair - We lower our hope to be closer to our reality. We basically give up. We might say, "I guess I'll never have a good marriage... I guess my child will never come to know Christ....I guess this is just how it is going to be...."

BUT

There is a better way -

The place between our hope and our reality is the desert. It is in this place that we wait for God - we wait for Him to lead us to a new place - the wonder of the cross. It is where we bring all our questions and fight to trust Him. How do we live there?

LAMENT

This is a prayer language - it is a passionate expression of grief or sorrow. It is a crying out to God in anguish, asking questions, and fighting to trust Him. It might feel uncomfortable to approach God this way because we seem to think it is disrespectful but actually it is raw and real and takes God at His Word. In lamenting, we are saying, God I know you are powerful but I don't understand how my experience matches up with who I know You to be. This is a complaint called out to God in faith and waiting to hear from Him. He welcomes this from us. 1/3 of the Psalms are laments. The Book of Habakkuk is a lament. It is not a complaint like the world complains but rather this is a prayer, taken to God with every expectation of hearing from Him.

### Psalm 22

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?*

*2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,  
and by night, but I find no rest.*

Jesus echoes Psalm 22:1 on the cross when He cries out, "My God My God why have you forsaken Me?" In that moment Jesus is both the Mediator and the Answer.

Lament let's God pull faith out of our hearts and leads us to praise and worship. Laments bring us closer to God. It is like tuning an old school radio - at first you hear static but as you play with the dial, the song comes with clarity. Look at these subsequent verses of Psalm 22:

*3 Yet you are holy,*

*enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

*4 In you our fathers trusted;*

*they trusted, and you delivered them.*

*5 To you they cried and were rescued;*

*in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*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.*

*28 For kingship belongs to the Lord,*

*and he rules over the nations.*

So, to summarize, we deal with the tension between our hope and our reality as we:

- Identify the burden
- Lament in the desert - in the tension between our hope and our reality. We enter in, fight the good fight of faith, and submit our plans to Him, knowing that we are part of a bigger Gospel Story.

Recall that Habakkuk was writing at the time that the kingdom was divided. He was part of Judah, the Southern Kingdom, watching destruction coming to Judah.

God planted Israel like a tree. He set them apart as His covenant people and showed the world how He would relate to, lead and provide for His covenant people. They failed repeatedly to keep His law. But God kept His promises to provide a savior. Habakkuk wrote at this point in history. Just as Judgment was coming to the tribe of Judah in the form of captivity from Babylon. But as promised, a shoot would grow from the stump of Jesse, which was the lineage of Christ, that would not be destroyed, and would in fact grow into a huge tree. The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It grows into the largest plant. The reign of Jesus is like this and it has already come, moving souls from darkness to light. Habakkuk was perplexed. He saw very dimly. Like Habakkuk, you are part of a much larger story - a huge redemptive story - all in God's timing and plan.

For now, enter into the desert, fight the good fight of faith, and hear the Lion of Judah gently say to you, "Tell me your sorrows...."

Shane and Shane video with John Piper:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyUPz6\\_TciY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyUPz6_TciY)

### **Questions for Discussion or Journaling:**

1. If you could choose to have everything in your life exactly as you desire, but without Jesus OR nothing go as you desire, but your life would be rich with Christ, which would you choose?
2. Would you consider yourself to be someone who worries? Is fear/anxiety a particular struggle for you? How do you cope?
3. Where have you most intensely felt the tension between your reality and your hope? How have you dealt with it?
4. Do you feel like Shasta? Would you be surprised to hear Aslan say, "I do not call you unfortunate?"
5. How do you define "Blessed?"
6. How can we cling to the truths of His Word even when we don't understand?
7. How can judgement/suffering bring blessing?
8. What do you think about Isaiah 55:8-9? How do you reconcile this with a tragic circumstance? What does all of this say about the character of God?