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| Topic | Why God |
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Our mind has an ability to be inherently very negative. When we are unsure of something our minds kick into a certain overdrive and in fact cognitive behavioral science will tell us that we inherently go negative.

Today, we are dealing with the topic of fear, uncertainty. Scripture tells us in the book of 2-Timothy Paul tries to encourage Timothy to say, look you got a gift, you are a young man don't be intimidated and he lays hands on Timothy and tells him to fan the gift that was given to him and preach and the word and he tells Timothy this.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Tim 1:7

As we look at the state of our country and the economy and this country is going through difficult times, it is not going to get any better. On a personal level there are many in our midst who struggle because of economy and finances. In our midst there are those who go through medical problems, relational problems that are our mind then go into that negativity and that are why this book is great.

Habakkuk is a book that deal with uncertainty because what Habakkuk does is that by the time he reaches the last chapter he looks out towards Judah. He says a corrupt nation and he sees war is coming and it is the war that Judah is not going to win and he knows the future is that Judah will be taken into captivity and despite that he rejoices that is to put fear into perspective. I think this is great, I think this is something that we all need to understand and take God's word as our power as we go through the lean years.

Chapter 1 deal with a question that is sort of creates fear and uncertainty and struggle and it is brought up in many ways in verse 13 when he says, why then do you tolerate the treacherous. Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous?

- Verse 2, how long O Lord must I cry for.
- Verse 3, why do you tolerate wrong.
- Verse 2, why do you make me look at injustice.

Putting it in simple terms, he is saying why is my life so bad. Why did my marriage not end up well, why is it up to now other people seem to having better than me?

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK:

Habakkuk is very much structured like Chinese finger trap. It shows us a little bit of how we tackle fear. A Chinese trap is bamboo trap. You put your finger in one part of it and you ask someone else to stick their finger to the other. When you stick your finger into the other what happens is that the more you pull the harder it becomes. In fact the more desperately you pull the trap grips you better and if you think fear and anxiety are like that. You get worried and you pray and pray. The more you pray the fear grips you because your mind goes into a situation where it questions what if it is not going to work out. We expand that fear and we magnify it and the more we pull you get desperate, you pull harder and harder and you get irrational and it grips you harder and it causes you pain. That is what fear does.

In chapter 1 he demonstrates a lot of this. It is not wrong, it is a natural cause. You need to go through to get to victory and chapter 1 is that?

How do you get out of trap?

To get out of the trap you actually have to pull back and look at the thing and when you have a big vision that is what God does to Habakkuk. Look at the big vision. When you have a big picture of your problem, a larger picture of God's plan and history you then realize the way to defeat your fear, the way to defeat your problem is to face it and you do the very thing everything in your being tells you not to do. You push and part of you say it is crazy, you are trapped but when you push it lets you go. Habakkuk in many ways is divided that way. He pulls at God at chapter 1 and pulls and pulls. In chapter 2 he begins to understand grace and pride of man and how the righteous live by faith and he understands that God's glory will sweep the whole world and in chapter 3 he looks face on and he moves that is Habakkuk for you. Here is the first thing that we all can understand. Chapter 1

How Long, O Lord...?

Anxiety or fear is not necessary bad. In fact a Christian's entire life is in comfortable zone, is happy, he has no medical problems. He has got a great marriage. All these things we all dream of, we all privately wish our life has that security and that comfort; in fact a person like this is really quite useless to God because he does not understand suffering. He does not understand what it is like to be on age and to knock not and sometime God puts us through that because God wants us to learn, persevere and to be shaped and this is what He does.

How long, O Lord? And scholars will tell you. He has been praying this some scholars say 20 years. He is not the only one; King David says the same thing, how long, O Lord? So if you have been praying and you have a problem and you have been knocking and knocking on the door and asking and not getting anywhere, be encouraged, the very act of doing this prayer is a godly act and you will find out this is one of his great characteristic. This is a man who does not let go. What is he really complaining about and we find it out in verse 1

“How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?”

It is an accusation prayer. He is accusing God of not listening to him and he is only starting to get warmed up and we find it from verses 1 to 4.

HISTORY OF JUDAH:

Judah is in his twilight years, the last king; King Josiah was a great king. Son of Josiah is Jehoiakim who was a bad king. He was a corrupt king. He was a king that took money from the people; he was a king that basically manipulated the judiciary. Under this king corruption grew very much. He was a bad king and here justice had become a joke and so Habakkuk looks at it and he gets angry. He is really angry. He has been praying for such a long time

2 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? 3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?....

Why God you don't seem to listen? And out of the blue after may be years of praying God answers and His answer is something really great. He says

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”

Paul quotes this in Acts chapter 13 verse 14 to the Pharisees when he tells them that Jesus is the only way, the truth and the gospel and he warns the Pharisees by quoting Habakkuk for the Pharisees could not believe it.

Habakkuk was upset because God was sending the Babylonian, the Chaldean army to punish Judah for his inequities and when they come they come like a horde, they fly like a vulture, they deride king, they sweep like wind.

Then God drops a hint that they will come like a wind and go like a wind and go on like the wind they too will disappear. There is a hint there but Habakkuk is too swept up, he cannot believe this and so he goes to his second complain. He says, God this does not make sense and we find that from verses 12 all the way to 17. Now the English translation says,

O Lord, are you not from everlasting but the Hebrew is better. If you take the Hebrew Bible the way the actual construction in Hebrew is this. I thought you were from everlasting. I thought you are God. Aren't you a God, isn't a good God supposed to do this, aren't you a compassionate God. Why God? That is the way to get into it. He does not get it and he is really upset now and his insulting tone is now getting really bad. He is almost brutally confronting God. Every scholar who has done this has picked it up. The way to wrap it in simple English is this Habakkuk is telling God, do something for injustice. God's reply was I am going to bring more injustice and so it totally breaks him.

- **What you wrestle in prayer reflects what is important to you.**
- **Bring your doubts to God, not to others.**
- **God answers prayers – but we may not like some of His answers.**

WHAT YOU WRESTLE IN PRAYER REFLECTS WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE.

One of the things for all of us to acknowledge, essentially we are self-centered and chapter 2 has the most insidious sin all of us have and that is the sin of pride. There are some many things that we think we are doing for God but unconsciously there is a desire to doing our own little thing. We all had this problem. So here is a very simple way to test it out. You ask yourself, what are the majority of your prayers especially in more particular focus what are the prayers that you really wrestle about.

What Habakkuk is doing is that, he is burdened for God's covenant and God's people and the church is the new Israel. What burdens you will reveal your fears. So for example if I am always praying about my business does well that reveals my fear.

What Habakkuk prayer reveals is that he is not praying about himself. He is not praying that he has got cancer or his friend got cancer or about his business, he is praying for the people. He has got a bigger vision. We are very much like having a close mindset. In chapter 2 Habakkuk describes the rich as people living in cages and they push the cage high up so that they are out of harm's way. We all want to do our ministry among things that we are comfortable with and we can do self-actualization. You don't realize it, it is unconscious, but you unpack your mind and sit down. A lot of things that we do are self-centered and that is the root of sin. The root of sin is self-centeredness, even for those of us who are involved in ministry, we cloak it in religious words but at the bottom of it there is a lot of self-centeredness.

BRING YOUR DOUBTS TO GOD, NOT TO OTHERS.

There are not of people that do not believe in God, they will blog about it. They write emails about it. They will talk about it. They will say if God is so good what doesn't he do something about the wrong things in the world. What God is telling us is that don't let others to brag about it, you bring it to me.

Habakkuk's Faith Struggles

God is indifferent. That is verses 1-4 is. How long must I call for help, you do not listen, you do not say. Why do you make me look at injustice, why do you tolerate wrong? That is his first complaint. God does not care about my life and God is saying you take that to him.

God is inconsistent. He says in verse 12

12 Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, you 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....

He is building a case to tell God, God you are a good God and this is then he throws in.

...Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?

You are inconsistent. You are good God, these are barbarians who are murderers and you let them come in. They are going to be like the fisherman with a net who sweeps us and pull us out of the shore and they do it again.

God is unfair.

Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

He makes a presupposition that the Babylonians are more wicked than him. Pain is real and there are those of us who suffer in so silence and sometimes we in the church we don't give people a chance to just tear it out and they bottle it deep inside. What Habakkuk is doing, he is throwing it all towards the God. He is pushing it out.

To move from fear to faith this is the journey you have to take and chapter 1 deals with it. You cannot get to chapter 3 before you do this.

Habakkuk means to embrace. He is a clinger. He challenges God you cannot break that. He goes to God and say you do not listen, you make me look at violence. God are you really God, he is rude. Some of us say why God you have done this to me. You are not right, I don't deserve this. He is bursting out, he is screaming to God. He challenges God and not only he challenges, he brings this. He says, what you are doing does not make sense. He establishes a case, tells God this is your character. So what you are doing is, you are completely wrong. He wrestles with God. He does all the things a lot of us don't do but he is a clinger, he never abandons God, because Habakkuk understands something and that is why Paul uses this in Acts 13 to the Pharisees. He understands God knows how we speak when we are desperate and we sometimes bottle it. If you are really honest with yourself, the way we deal with pain or fears is that we live with it and we bury it deep inside and we push it inside and back of our head and then we put activities and things in front and we hope that carries us through. It does for a while but at one point it comes out and when it comes out by God it comes out in space and it breaks into your life and God says pull it out and we pull it out by grace. Because he recognizes he is not saved by having legalistic prayers. He is not saved because of his works, he understands Judah was redeemed not because they were bigger nation but because God plucked them out not because they did anything and so he comes to God boldly and that is what grace does. Because I

didn't deserve his marriage, his righteousness was put in me, I walk in faith by coming clean with God and when you do that God will make you a faithful wrestler and a clinger.

God tells Habakkuk to look at the nations, meaning God purpose for all of us is larger than what we expect. When we go through bad things, our natural instinct is to say, why and we pray and we don't get it. We pray God rescue me from this and if it doesn't come to pass. Our answers are always in the wind.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS – BUT WE MAY NOT LIKE SOME OF HIS ANSWERS.

Martin Lloyd Jones wrote a book in the 50s called from Fear to Faith, it was based on studies of Habakkuk. He wrote it when the world was in the throes of a cold war and the thing that everyone was afraid of was soviet union and communism and Habakkuk was saying, all your problems, they are all tiny dots, whether it is the cancer that you are having or the business or your community and they are all dots that go larger and larger and he was trying to tell everyone, God works even through communism.

Then enemy then was communism, the enemy here is Babylonian, now there is a new enemy but God is still unstoppable.

The Babylonians came and swept across like vultures then they also died of and the Persians came. Persians came and swept like vultures, they too died of then the Greeks came but they came with a language and suddenly there is a *lingua franca* that is why up till now people speak Latin. After the Greeks left the Romans took over and the romans took the Greek language and the Roman Empire went so big they established Pax Romana, the peace of Rome. So that there is a road, they had a road network, they had a sail network, and they had port.

If Judah wasn't taken into captivity, Babylon won't have happened, Persian won't have happened, the Greek empire wouldn't have occurred, the Roman Empire wouldn't have happened and if all of this wouldn't have happened Christ would not have come. God works that way. Joseph had the same thing when he was in Egypt.

Because of our self-centred nature to our small little problems we tend to get into fear but there are larger issues and they got to do with our country, like the way Habakkuk look at Judah and so when you look at certain things in this country, not just the corruption and things like that but when we look at specific things happening to Christian community be assured God's hand is behind us.