

Praying in the Time of Trouble

Lecture 10

Habakkuk 3:1-2

"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy."

INTRODUCTION:

We see Habakkuk the prophet in this book worrying and wondering, moving to the watchtower to hear from God, but in chapter three He is praising God from the depths of his soul.

God showed the prophet the evil that existed in the Babylonian nation. God pronounced five woes upon the invading armies. But..... against this dark background of judgment and sin, God gave three very important assurances:

- I. The assurance of His grace—"*The just shall live by his faith*"(v. 4);
- II. The assurance of His glory—"*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*" (v. 14);
- III. The assurance of His government—"*But the Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him*" (v. 20).

In chapter 3 he moved from watching and waiting to worshiping and witnessing. We find the prophet wrapped up in praise to God!

Habakkuk started in the valley, but he ended up on the mountaintop!

How did all of this happen? He learned that the just shall live by faith.

Faith looks to God for what seems impossible to man.

Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible.

A good poem about faith says:

Doubt sees the wall;

Faith sees the way.

Doubt sees the darkest night;

Faith sees the day.

Doubt dreads to take a step;

Faith soars high.

Doubt questions who believes;

Faith answers, "I."

"Faith is that belief of the intellect, consent of the affections, and act of the will by which the soul places itself in the keeping of Christ as its ruler and Savior." *Daniel Whedon*

One has said, "Faith is the capacity to trust God while not being able to make sense out of everything."

When you come to chapter 3 of Habakkuk, you discover the prophet engaged in three activities. In verses 1 and 2 he is praying: "A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet, upon Shigionoth."

What are the possibilities to the meaning of Shigionoth?

- 1- _____
- 2- _____

This musical notation would suggest that he was one of the _____ in the temple.

In verses 16-19 Habakkuk is praising. It's a wonderful climax to this marvelous book as the prophet stands on his high places and praises God and trusts God no matter what would happen to him.

As you consider this prayer, you will discover that it expresses three great concerns.

I. Concerned About God's Word

The prophet was concerned about God's Word: "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid (3:2)."

It's marvelous when we learn to close our mouths and open our ears and listen for the voice of God.

Every Christian should be able to say, "*Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth*" (I Sam. 3:9).

Habakkuk 2:2 says, "*And the Lord answered me, and said,*" and then God spoke to him and told him about _____ and about His _____.

So he heard the Word of God, which is what he wanted to do.

Hearing the Word generated faith.

Faith doesn't come through feelings—faith comes through the Word of God. "*So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Rom.10:17).

Now he was able to pray. The _____ and _____ go together.

See John 15:7

You cannot separate the Word of God from prayer, because prayer depends on _____, and faith depends on the Word of God.

Why can't you separate the Word of God and prayer?

Habakkuk had power in prayer because he heard the Word of God. But when he heard the Word of God, he was _____. "O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid" (Hab. 3:2). In verse 16 we are told how frightened he was.

Look again at what he said. His heart trembled, his lips quivered, his bones weakened, and his legs wobbled. That's what he said literally. From head to foot, the prophet was stirred by the Word of God. We don't see much of that today.

We have people studying the Word of God but are not _____ by the Word of God.

When Daniel heard the Word of God and saw the vision, he trembled. He became ill when God talked to him about prophetic events (see Dan. 7:15,28). See Isaiah 66:2 and Psalm 119:120.

II. Concern About God's Work

Habakkuk's second concern in his prayer was God's work. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known" (Hab. 3:2). See Hab.1:5-6.

What was God's work? God told him in 1:5,6.

The word "revive" in Habakkuk 3:2 has nothing to do with the _____ although we can make an application with it.

The word "revive" means to "_____".
It was God's work. If it was God's work, it had to be _____.

Why did he want this work to continue?

See v.12.

"We shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O Mighty God, thou hast established them for correction" (v. 12).

Habakkuk not only wanted this work to be revived, but he wanted it to be made known. (See 3:2). This is exactly what God wanted done. "The Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it" (2:2).

The prophet wanted the Word of God and the work of God to be _____ with everyone. This is the important task that God has given to the Church.

What is the message that needs to go out?

III. Concerned About God's Wrath

In the third place he was concerned about God's wrath. "*In wrath remember mercy*" (Hab.3:2). The nation _____ wrath. All of the woes that were pronounced in Habakkuk 2 on the nation of Babylon could have been pronounced on the people of Judah.

The nation deserved wrath, but the prophet prayed, "*In wrath remember mercy*" (3:2).

ILLUSTRATION:

He was like Moses. When the nation of Israel sinned by worshipping the golden calf, Moses asked God for mercy (see Ex. 32).

When the nation _____ at Kadesh-Barnea and to enter into the Promised Land, Moses asked God for mercy (see Num. 14).

Read Jeremiah 10:23-24. He prayed for mercy. In His justice God had to punish sin, but in His grace He provided for cleansing and forgiveness.

How did God show mercy at a later date?

"*He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*" (Ps. 103:10).

God is at work today in mercy. Compare Acts 13:40-41. Habakkuk is quoted.

What is the work of God's grace that Paul talked about?

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD IS MERCIFUL?

Why does God show mercy?

God's mercy flows to those who show _____ to others.

See Hebrews 4:16.

See Leviticus 16:12-15.

The "mercy seat" in the tabernacle testifies to the fact that God is a God of mercy. It is mentioned 4 times in the passage we just read.

Mercy is possible through the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ and by no other way. See Heb 10:19-21.

God had rather forgive than to judge.