

**How Long, O Lord – Part 3**  
**Uncertainty and Sovereignty – Hab. 1:12-2:1**  
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

**Intro:**

- What are we to do, as people of faith, when we face ongoing, lingering, and long-term challenges, hardship, and suffering? What are we to do when it feels like God is not providing help, deliverance, or relief? The book of Habakkuk helps us in these times by giving us guidance, understanding, and hope.
- This morning, we are going to hear again from our dear prophet Habakkuk, who is struggling with God's answer to his cry for help, and his lament for his circumstances and those of the people he loves. Today, we will learn what we are to do as we continue to struggle to understand our suffering as we trust in God's sovereignty and plan. The first thing we are to do is to continue to rehearse what we know about God.

**Continue to rehearse what you know about God**

**Hab. 1:12-13a NIV**

**Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not 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.**

- In times of suffering, it is good, and right, and comforting, and anchoring, and healing, and hope producing, to rehearse what is true about God and what we have in Him. It is so good for our soul and our relationship to quote *to* God what you know *about* God.
- Notice all the ways Habakkuk addresses God:
  - *Lord (x2)* – the one who is in charge of my life, the one I commit myself.
  - *Everlasting* – you are eternal, you are the creator, you know all things.
  - *My God* – you are not a distant God or a God of others. You are my God.
  - *My Holy One* – what you do is right and just, pure and good.
  - *We will not die* – this is in reference to God keeping His promises. He is a covenant-keeping God. Because of His promises, we have a future. We have hope; we will be sustained. He knows the promises and knows they will be kept (Gen 12:1-3, 15:4-6, 17:5-8, 2 Sam. 7:13, 16, 1 Kings 2:45, 9:5).
  - *You appoint* – you are in charge, and you are involved.
  - *My Rock* – on whom I build my life, a sure foundation, a cornerstone, my refuge, my shield, my deliverer, the one who can be trusted and relied upon. These are some of the verses Habakkuk was leaning on: **Deut 32:4, “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.” 1 Sam 2:2, “There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.** (See also Ps. 18:2, 28:1, 42:9, 71:3, 81:16, Matt. 7:24, Rom. 9:33, I Cor. 10:4, 1 Peter 2:6)
  - *You ordain* – you order, you command, you are in control.
  - *You are pure* – evil is not in you and will not be with you.
  - *You cannot tolerate wrongdoing* – you are just and will do justly.
- This is of utmost importance to do, especially when you are in a difficult place or situation. Rehearse what you know about God. This is why we read the word, over, and over, and over again. This is why we gather together and sing. This is why we listen and learn, so that we can

know God, remember His story, remember our story, and remember His covenants and His promises. Know whom you have believed and be convinced that He is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to you (2 Tim 1:12). These things will help you and will become more precious to you as you do so.

- Continue to rehearse what you know about God, and continue to ask your questions.

### Continue to ask your questions

#### **Hab. 1:13b NIV**

**Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?**

- After you continue to rehearse what you know about God, continue to compare those things to your present reality. So knowing these things are true, then why this? Why do you continue to tolerate the treacherous? Why are you “silent” while the wicked swallow up those who are more righteous than themselves?
- I don’t think the tone of these questions is one of accusation but of information. Habakkuk is looking for understanding and clarity. It is right for us to ask these questions. God will answer them as He sees fit (i.e., Job). He will give you what you need, what is right, and what is good in accordance with His will. We will have all the answers we need at the right time. We will know fully in eternity, but now we know in part, and we will know enough to get us through and keep us in Him (see I Cor. 13:12).
- In suffering, in calamity, in heartache, in grief, continue to rehearse what you know is true about God. Continue to ask your questions, and continue to share your objections.

### Continue to share your objections

#### **Hab. 1:14-17 NIV**

**You have made people like the fish in the sea, like the sea creatures that have no ruler.**

**15 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.**

**16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food. 17 Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?**

- Habakkuk has some more observations and questions. He uses the analogy of fishing to describe the Babylonians. People are like fish, caught, hooked, and captured by these wicked people. And because the Babylonians can do so, they rejoice and are glad.
- And also God, they don’t worship you. They worship the tools they use to do these things. And by doing these things, they also live in luxury and enjoy the best of life. So this is the other reality of the Israelites situation. God, how long will you allow this to happen? Are you going to deal with the Babylonians as well? What are you going to do with them?
- These are legitimate observations and are followed by a good question. It seemed like the “cure” of the Babylonian invasion is worse than the “illness” of Judean sin. Habakkuk asked for a cure for the situation of the country and His life. And then, when the answer came, he did not like it.

- Why is sharing objections okay? Why does God interact with us this way receiving complaints and objections from us? If He is sovereign, then why do we pray? He ordains both the ends and the means. And because we are in a relationship with God, and we are to interact with Him. This is how we become more mature, not just knowing *what God does*, but knowing *why God does things*. Not just obeying His commands but knowing His heart. This is how good parenting works as well. God desires us to grow up and grow in Him.

### **1 Cor 14:20-21**

**Brothers and Sisters, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.**

- God wants us to be mature in our thinking. That is another important aspect of being in church, so that we can mature and grow in our thinking, and we can help others to do the same. (See Eph 4:12-16, 1 Cor 2:6-8, Phil 3:15-16, Col 1:28-29, Col 4:12-13, Heb 5:12-14.)

### **Continue to stand and wait on the Lord**

#### **Hab. 2:1 NIV**

**I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint.**

- Continue to do what you are called to do in the capacity you can – and more than likely, you can do way more than you think you can. Don't shut down or even stop speaking or trying, or crying or calling out. Your ministry matters for you and for others. Notice he said, I will stand at my watch, and know what he is to say to others but this complaint. Habakkuk is still doing the work of the ministry to which He is called.
- Stand in faith and stand in your place.
- Put all your questions to God. Look and wait for His response. He *will* respond to you. Be actively looking for Him. Do not give in or give up.

#### **Ps 25:3**

**None who wait for the Lord shall be put to shame.**

#### **Ps 27:14**

**Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**

#### **Mic 7:7**

**But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.**

(See also Ps 37:34, Ps 130:5-6, Isa 30:18, Isa 40:30, Rom 8:25, 1 Cor 1:7-8, Gal 5:5-6, 1 Thess 1:10)

### **Testimony – Gretchen Spooner**

#### **Conclusion**

- In your sadness, struggles, and difficulties, continue to rehearse what you know about God. Continue to ask questions. Continue to make your objections. Continue to stand and wait on the Lord.

- Rick Bovell will be speaking next week as we will hear the Lord's response and see the importance of living by faith.
- Prayer people and prayer.

## **Communion**

## **Benediction**

As you wait on the Lord, may your strength be renewed, may you mount up with wings like eagles, may you run and not be weary, may you walk and not faint. Amen (Isa 40:31)

## **Questions for Growth Groups**

- Rehearse what you know about God right now.
- How can you continue to grow in your understanding of God?
- What is the importance of being in an active Christian community?
- What are you waiting on God for, and are you continuing to fulfill your calling while you wait?
- Pray for each other.