

YET

Habakkuk

When God's Ways Shake Us 3/29/26

DAY ONE

The Complaint

Habakkuk 1:2–3 "How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?"

Habakkuk opens his book at full volume. There is no easing in, no diplomatic preamble. Just raw, unfiltered frustration aimed directly at heaven.

Most of us were not taught to pray this way. We were taught that prayer is a reverent, composed activity that you come to God with your hat in your hand and your best behavior on. Habakkuk did not get that memo. And what's remarkable is that God doesn't rebuke him for it. He answers him.

There's something important in Habakkuk's complaint that's easy to miss. He is not doubting God's existence. He is doubting God's activity. And those are very different things. You only get this angry at someone you actually expected something from. You don't shake your fist at a God you don't believe in.

Habakkuk's complaint is, in a strange way, evidence of his faith. He believed God was good, just, and powerful, and that belief is exactly what made the silence so unbearable. His outrage comes from a place of deep trust that has hit a wall it doesn't understand.

The invitation here is not to manufacture Habakkuk's level of frustration. It's to notice whether there is an honest conversation you've been avoiding with God. Something you've been too polite (or too afraid) to actually say out loud to him. God can handle your honest questions. What he has trouble working with is the version of you that's performing trust while quietly bleeding out on the inside.

- Is there something you've been carrying as a quiet complaint against God that you haven't said out loud to him yet? What would it look like to bring it directly to him the way Habakkuk did?
- When God seems silent or inactive in a situation you've been praying about, what is your typical response — do you push in closer or pull back? Why?
- How would you describe the difference between a crisis of belief (God doesn't exist) and a crisis of trust (God isn't doing what I expected)? Which one is closer to what you've experienced?

DAY TWO

The Answer That Made It Worse

Habakkuk 1:5–6 *""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. I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwellings not their own.""*

God answers Habakkuk's prayer. And his answer is worse than silence.

He's not ignoring Habakkuk. He's not withholding. He is actively at work. He's raising up the most ruthless, most godless empire in the known world to serve as the instrument of judgment on his own people. Habakkuk asked for intervention. God sent Babylon.

This is the pattern that shows up over and over in the life of faith, and it's the one we are least prepared for. We are fine (in theory) with God correcting us. We say in small groups that growth involves discomfort. We put it on coffee mugs. But when we discover what the instrument of that growth actually is, we sound a lot like Habakkuk. THEM? You're going to use THEM?

The difficult boss. The health diagnosis that won't resolve. The relationship that keeps exposing things in you that you'd rather not see. The season of waiting that stretches far past what seems necessary. These are the Babylonians of our lives , instruments we never would have chosen, tools that feel less like grace and more like assault.

And yet. God is always answering our prayers. We just don't always recognize his methods. The answer to "make me more patient" is rarely a morning free from everything that tests your patience. The answer to "grow my faith" is rarely the removal of every reason to need it.

Notice what Habakkuk does here. He doesn't run. He doesn't go quiet. He brings his confusion back to the one who caused it, which is, in itself, an act of faith. When God's ways don't make sense, the worst thing you can do is stop talking to him.

- What is the "Babylon" in your life right now — the instrument God seems to be using that you never would have chosen? What makes it hard to accept?
- Think about a past season where God's answer to your prayer looked nothing like what you asked for. Looking back, can you see anything he was doing through it that you couldn't see at the time?
- When God's ways don't make sense, is your instinct to run from him, argue with him, or go quiet? What does Habakkuk's response teach you about a better way?

DAY THREE

The Watchtower

Habakkuk 2:1, 4 "I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me... but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness."

Habakkuk doesn't have resolution. He doesn't have an explanation. He's still confused, still wrestling, still sitting with an answer that made things worse instead of better. And what he does with all of that is climb to the highest place he can find and position himself to hear whatever God says next.

That is one of the most honest and courageous postures in all of Scripture. I don't understand. I haven't stopped believing. I'm going to stay right here until you say something.

The verse God gives him in response in Habakkuk 2:4 is so important that Paul quotes it in Romans, the author of Hebrews quotes it in Hebrews, and Paul quotes it again in Galatians. Three New Testament authors, three different theological arguments, all built on three Hebrew words: righteous, live, faith.

The righteous person doesn't earn their way through hard seasons. They live, every day, present tense, continuously from a standing that was never based on circumstances going smoothly. The word "live" is doing a lot of work here. This is not a one-time act of belief. This is a daily, ongoing posture of trusting the character of God when the evidence is ambiguous.

Faith, in Hebrews 10, is described with a word that means the refusal to shrink. When pressure comes, when the Babylonians are on the horizon, when the circumstances are pressing in, faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is the refusal to make yourself smaller. To pull in. To fold up.

Habakkuk didn't shrink. He climbed a tower and waited. That is what faith looks like from the outside, not a feeling, but a posture. A decision to remain positioned toward God even when you don't understand what he's doing.

— What does "taking your stand at a watch post" look like practically in your life right now? What spiritual posture do you need to adopt in order to stay positioned to hear from God in this season?

— The verse says the righteous will "live" by faith" not just believe once, but live continuously from faith. Where in your daily life are you most tempted to fall back on your own understanding rather than trusting God's character?

— Think about the difference between faith as a feeling and faith as a posture. Which one have you been operating from? What would it look like to choose the posture even when the feeling isn't there?

DAY FOUR

The Trembling

Habakkuk 3:16–17 "I heard and my heart pounded, my lips quivered at the sound; decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled... Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls —"

Habakkuk is terrified. He hears what's coming, the rumble of the Babylonian army, the inevitability of the judgment, and his whole body gives way. Heart pounding. Lips quivering. Bones decaying. Legs trembling.

This is not a cleaned-up faith moment. This is not a man who has arrived at theological peace and is now serenely above his circumstances. This is a prophet, a man who has just had a direct conversation with God, who has received a revelation that three New Testament authors will quote and his legs are trembling.

I think we need to sit with that. Because a lot of us have been taught, implicitly or explicitly, that spiritual maturity means the trembling goes away. That if you trust God enough, if you pray consistently enough, if your theology is solid enough then the fear stops. Habakkuk is the counter-argument.

Trembling is not the opposite of faith.

What Habakkuk does with his fear is not suppress it or spiritualize it or pretend it's something other than what it is. He names it. He puts it in the prayer. He writes it into the song that will be sung in the temple. And then he keeps going.

And then he does something even harder. He names every worst-case scenario without flinching. Six of them. Fig tree, vines, olive crop, fields, sheep, cattle. Everything gone. He opens the door to the full catastrophe and invites it all in. He doesn't say "it probably won't be that bad." He says though. Though. Though. Though. Though. Though.

This is the kind of faith worth aspiring to, not the kind that tells itself things probably won't get that hard, but the kind that looks directly at how hard it might actually get and then chooses what comes next anyway.

- What is the thing you are most afraid of right now? Have you named it honestly before God, the way Habakkuk named his six "thoughts?" What would it mean to do that today?
- Where have you been tempted to minimize the hard things in your life — either to protect your faith or to avoid burdening others? What does Habakkuk's honesty give you permission to do?
- Think about the difference between suppressing fear and naming fear. How does bringing your trembling directly to God change your relationship with it?

DAY FIVE

Yet

Habakkuk 3:17–19 *"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls — yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights."*

One word bridges everything. Yet.

Not when. Not after. Not if things improve. Yet. Right now, in the middle of this, with all six catastrophes named and the army on the horizon... yet I will rejoice.

Notice what Habakkuk does not say. He doesn't say yet I understand. He doesn't say yet I am at peace with how this is playing out. He doesn't say yet I can see how this is going to work out for my good. He doesn't have any of that. What he has is a choice. A choice to locate his joy somewhere that the circumstances cannot reach.

And then the image he uses to describe what God is giving him in the middle of all of it: feet like a deer's.

A deer on rocky, mountainous terrain is not a deer that has been given easier terrain. It's a deer that has been given feet designed for the terrain it's already on. The rocks don't disappear. The steep climbs don't flatten out. What changes is the deer's capacity to navigate what's already there.

God doesn't remove the rocks. He changes your feet.

And here is the larger picture underneath all of it. Habakkuk's "yet" is extraordinary. But it is not the largest "yet" in the story. Romans 5:8 says: while we were still sinners ... while, yet, in the middle of it all, Christ died for us. God looked at the full weight of human sin and said yet. Yet I will go. Yet I will pay. Yet I will bring them home.

The cross is God's "yet" spoken over the human race. And the reason you can say "yet I will rejoice" in the middle of your Babylon is because God already said "yet I will love you" — and proved it at a cross on a Friday that looked like the end but was actually the hinge of everything.

You can say yet because he said it first.

- What does it mean to you that Habakkuk's "yet" comes after naming the full catastrophe, not before? How does that change the way you think about joy in hard seasons?
- The deer image describes feet designed for the terrain you're already on — not easier terrain. What would it look like for God to give you "sure feet" in your current circumstances, rather than changing the circumstances themselves?
- How does knowing that God said "yet" over you first — at the cross, while you were still a sinner — change the way you face your own "though" list today?

A Note to Close

Habakkuk ends his book not with an explanation, but with a song. He never gets a complete answer to his questions. The Babylonians are still coming. The fig tree is still bare. And yet he is worshipping.

That is the invitation of this series. Not to have all your questions answered. Not to have your circumstances resolve. But to discover that the God who is with you in the shaking is more stable than anything the shaking is threatening to take.

Jonah ran. Saul distorted. Habakkuk trembled and then he trusted. The same God who shook him held him. And the faith that came out of the shaking was more sure than anything he had before it.

May the same be true for you.