

WHEN LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

INTRODUCTION

In life we all face situations that just don't make sense. We may serve the Lord, pray regularly, tithe, and even do good deeds. As far as we are aware, we are living a life of faith, then one day, something takes place that completely throws us off from what we believe to be the norm for a child of God...

For example, a retrenchment, sickness, an accident, a financial meltdown or even the unexpected loss of a loved one.

There are other, more general things that may take place... like the lawlessness, corruption, lack of service delivery that takes place in our country, and we are impacted as Christians even though we are good Christian citizens, we pray for our leaders and we live honest lives of integrity.

Such circumstances may not only cause great anxiety, but may even result in us questioning God.

The prophet Habakkuk faced a situation like this and he questioned God. As we read the book of Habakkuk, he starts to understand what is happening and the book ends with the most amazing prayer, I believe we can learn a lot from this amazing short prophetic book this morning.

MESSAGE

HABAKKUK'S COMPLAINT

Habakkuk 1:2-4 (NLT) How long, O Lord, must I call for help? But you do not listen! "Violence is everywhere!" I cry, but you do not come to save. 3 Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight. 4 The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted.

Wow, doesn't that sound familiar? This prophet could have been writing about the world we currently live in!

If we keep reading to chapter 2:20 we see a number of complaints and questions by the prophet and answers from God:

- Habakkuk - "Lord, why are you not listening? Why is all this evil around and you don't do anything about it?"- "God, why are you doing so little?"
- The Lord answers, "I am raising up the army of the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation".
- Habakkuk - "Lord, how can you use a more wicked nation to punish a less wicked nation?" - "God, why are you doing so much?"

Habakkuk started off confused and questioning, and when God answered, he remained confused and questioning?

***What questions have you been asking God to give you answers for?
What is it in your life today that does not make sense?***

GOD HAS THE ANSWER

The Lord answers explaining that both nations are to be judged and punished appropriately for their evil acts. But the key lays in these verses:

Habakkuk 1:5 (NLT) The Lord replied, "Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it".

Habakkuk 2:2-4 (NLT) Then the Lord said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. ³ This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. ⁴ Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God (the just shall live by faith).

We can learn a number of things from these replies from God:

1. The Lord replied to Habakkuk – If He replied, He must have been listening. Know today that God is not just simply sitting, hearing your cries and complaints and doing nothing about it. He has a plan!
2. "Look and be amazed I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it"
 - a. God is doing something about your complaints.
 - b. It will take place in your own lifetime!
 - c. Even if He told you what He is up to, its likely you wouldn't believe it!
3. "The vision is for a future time" – God's timing is not our timing, He doesn't have to move when we ask Him, we can't instruct God, He will move in His time! But God does do something when we call on Him: **Psalm 138:3** (NLT) As soon as I pray, You answer me; You encourage me by giving me strength – God gives us strength!
4. Be patient, even if the answer you need is slow in coming, it will surely take place!
5. What do we do in the meantime? **Habakkuk 2:4** The proud (sinners) will suffer as they try to find answers to their problems in their own strength.... But the just, the righteous, those who trust in God shall live by faith – "Habakkuk, start to live by faith!"

***Do you realise that God has heard your complaints and requests?
Do you realise that He is doing something about it?
Are you willing to be patient? When God says He will do something,
He will do it in His timing!***

Are you living by faith?

THE GREAT CHANGE OF HEART

Something then took place in Habakkuk's life and after the first two chapters of lament and complaint and questioning God, chapter 3 is totally different.

Look at these extracts:

Habakkuk 3:2-3 (NLT) I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy.

This does not sound like the same person!

- Instead of questions and accusations against God, suddenly Habakkuk starts to praise God.
- Instead of demands, his attitude has changed and he gently asks God for mercy.

Habakkuk 3:17-18(NLT) Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, 18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

- Instead of saying, "God, why are you not doing something?", Haggai says, "God, I will trust you no matter what! Not only will I trust you, but I will rejoice in you".

What a change in attitude – it leads to the question, why, what has happened to bring about such a change in Habakkuk's outlook?

Habakkuk must have taken note of God's words: **Habakkuk 2:4** (NKJV) "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; **But the just shall live by his faith.**

When we face confusing situations and troubles and trials that we don't understand, God is telling us, "Trust Me, I have things under control, live by faith, live in faithfulness!"

HOW DID HABAKKUK GO FROM QUESTIONING TO FAITH?

Habakkuk 3:2 (NLT) I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy.

- Habakkuk had heard of what God had done in the past...
 - He had heard of the awesome, mighty, fear-inspiring God.

- He had heard what God had done to His enemies.
- He had heard of the wonders He had done too.
- He had heard of God's mercy.

1. He built his faith by reminding himself of what God had done in the past.

Habakkuk 3:18-19 (AMP) The Lord God is my Strength, my personal bravery, and my invincible army; He makes my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk [not to stand still in terror, but to walk] and make [spiritual] progress upon my high places [of trouble, suffering, or responsibility]!

2. He placed his hope in God for the future:

- God remained His hope.
- He trusted God to guide him in the difficult and dangerous places.
- He declared God's blessing and help over His future.
- He makes my feet as deer's feet – Habakkuk had surefooted confidence in God for his future!

When facing the problems of today, we need to:

- ***Look back and see that the Lord brought us through the problems of the past!***
- ***Look forward in faith, "the just shall live by faith", and declare God's blessings and favour over our future.***

This is how we come to the point of trusting the Lord with our present and are able to say, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

CONCLUSION

When we don't understand our circumstances, we need to have faith in God:

- We need to look back and remind ourselves of what God has already done.
- We need to look forward in the hope of what God will still do.

Then we will be willing to trust God even when everything seems to be going wrong. We will retain our joy. It's as simple as that!

- We may not always understand, but we must realise that God has got a plan.
- We may not see the answer now, but we must trust God to give us an answer in our lifetime.

Jeremiah 29:11 (AMPC) For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

Philippians 4:4 (NKJV) Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

In the midst of the storm God is with us, He keeps us safe, steady and secure.
We must not lose our joy, God loves us.