



Do the Habakkuk!

Habakkuk 1

Maybe you've noticed that there are so many questions in life that are so difficult to answer. Think about it.

- Why do they say that alarm clock is going off when it's really coming on? Kind of bothers me.
- Why do they say that you park in a driveway and you drive on a parkway?
- Why do they say, "I slept the night like a baby" when everyone knows a baby wakes up in the night every two hours?

Those are silly questions, but I really want to ask and try to answer one of the most difficult questions that face us.

And we are going to do so from the book is called Habakkuk. [1] Let's turn there right now to Chapter 1.

And the driving question of the entire book is this. If you're taking notes, write this down. The key question of the book is: **Why doesn't God seem fair?** Maybe you've asked this before. You want to know, "Why doesn't God seem fair?" In fact versus 2 & 3 of chapter 1 you see Habakkuk asking a version of this question.

He wants to know

Habakkuk 1:2-3 *²How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? ³Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.*

If you fast-forward from the Old Testament book to today, people ask this kind of question all the time.

- "God why is it that the evil people they seem to prosper, but the good people- all these bad things happen them?"
- "Why is it that not why is it that the person to get into all sorts of bad stuff and lives to be 102, the great Christian father dies at the age of 42 of cancer?" What's up with that, God?
- "Why is it that that we try to raise our kids according to your word, really tried to do a good job but now our kids are messed up, and then you look at *their* kids, and they were like, not even involved, and their kids turn out okay?"
- Now what's up with this God? "How come I try to do what your Word says and financially I'm trying to do the right things and I'm not being blessed -- and there's someone else is out there whose not even giving, and they're being blessed?"
- "God how come someone else prays, and when they pray, you like seem to do things immediately, but when I pray, you don't do anything at all?"
- "How come I've got these headaches that don't go away? How come I'm battling with depression? How come someone I love is going through this, and God it seems like you *could* do something, but you don't? WHY? Why don't you seem fair?"

Now as we study the book of Habakkuk we find that he is asking questions like this, and you may say, "Well it's obvious he wasn't a real, deep, committed believer, like I am. Actually the Prophet Habakkuk was incredibly in love with God. But he, like so many people suddenly ran head-on into a brick (faith) wall, and the things that he saw, all of a sudden didn't line up of the things that he believed.

And it was a very difficult season for him. Many of you may be able to relate.

Background

A little bit about the book. Habakkuk is what's known as one of the 12 minor prophets. There's 12 books in the Old Testament, they're smaller books and they're the *minor* prophets.

Of the 12 we know less about Habakkuk than any of the others. All we know that he was most likely a temple musician and then at some point he became a priest and a then prophet.

What is a prophet? A prophet is someone who speaks on behalf of God. God would say, "Okay Habakkuk, here's what I want you to tell the people." And he would prophesy or speak whatever God told him.

Now the book was written in about a year 600 B.C., give or take a little bit, were not exactly sure. It was a time when God's people were becoming very corrupt. There was violence, there was corruption and there were all sorts of fights. There was all sorts of ungodliness. You could say that it was really a lot like what we experience today. There were bad people doing bad things to good people. And even the good people weren't so good.

And so God speaks to the Prophet and says, "These people that I love, they are becoming wicked. And for their own good, basically I'm going to punish them. But what you need to understand is I'm going to take *a far worse people*, who are much more evil than you and I'm going to use them to destroy you." And Habakkuk goes, "WHAT? That, that doesn't seem fair to me at all!"

That's why perhaps the name Habakkuk means what it means. The name Habakkuk means (write this down if you're taking notes) the name means "**to wrestle or to embrace.**" It means to embrace or wrestle.

And were going to watch Habakkuk wrestle with God though some very difficult times.

Today were not going to get what I would call a "**sitcom**" sermon. A lot of us have grown up watching sitcoms. Happy days. The humor, then some there'd be some tension in the plot, and within 30 minutes including commercials at the end

everything would be neatly tied, and every problem is resolved.

A lot of people like "sitcom sermons". A little humor, maybe a little bit of tension. At the end a nice story or a poem that makes us feel good or makes us cry you. Everything is neatly tied, and then you leave and go on with your life and everything is okay.

You will not get that out of message in Habakkuk. In fact, here you get the opposite. Something more like, in my opinion, what would resembles real-life. Tension, drama, and plenty of unanswered questions. With that foundation under our belt, let's get into the book.

Chapter 1

We'll start in **Habakkuk 1:1** *¹The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received.*

Now what is an Oracle? This is from the Hebrew word that means, "and utterance, a doom, and burden." What God gave the Prophet was a burden, a burdensome message, a dooming message. And he's going to go, "God, I don't want to tell them this. Because I don't like this. They're not to like this. I don't see anything good in this." In fact he's going to push back (he's the only one of the 12 minor prophets that pushes back) and argue with God, and he gets right up in God's business.

In verse 3, 4 and 5 he says this:

Habakkuk 1:3-5 *³Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.*

If you took it to our day and age, he would say "okay God, I don't get it.

- There was the drunk driver on his fourth drunk driving incident, and crashed into the car and kills the innocent four-year-old. Huh? What you have to say about that, God?
- And God, that girl keeps hopping from bed to bed to bed to bed, gets pregnant time and time again, aborts the children, and we're a godly couple and our one prayer is to have a child, and we can't get pregnant. HUH? What's up with that, God?

- Some angry 14-year-old comes into school with a gun and shot up 8 innocent kids. Where are you in that, God?
- Terrorism, corruption. God?

He goes on in verse 4:

“Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

“As far as I can see, nothing is turning out fair.”

Basically, Habakkuk has three major problems with god. Let me give them to you.

1. God you don't seem to care. Day by day, all these things go on the world that don't seem fair. God, you must not even care.
2. His second complaint is this. “God, you aren't doing much, when I believe you could. Now, there's some respect in this. “I know that you could, your all-powerful. I believe you could you do this one little thing and it would change everything God. And if I were in your shoes I'd do it. But you don't seem to really care because you are not doing when you could.
3. And number three, “What you *are* doing doesn't seem fair.”

In other words, what Habakkuk was saying, is “God if I were in your shoes I would do things totally different.”

Be honest. How many of you have ever thought something like that?

That's scary. To say “God, I don't like the way you're doing it. Is that even legal? In my mind that I'm thinking. Is God going to punish me for even thinking like that?

It is appropriate to say things like that to God? Is it fair game to question God. Well, in my opinion when you look at Scripture, it's absolutely fair game, to, at times, question God.

In fact, not only is it fair game, **but there are times when questioning God could become a significant part of your faith journey.** Read the Psalms. Over one-third of the Psalms are people crying out to God. “God, are you going to rescue me? Are you going to leave me forever? God, Help!

Read book of Job, the book of Lamentations. These are very godly people who are crying out. If

you don't believe that, skip over to the New Testament and read about Jesus when he was on the cross. Completely obedient to his father in every single way. Then when he becomes our sin offering, and God pours out his wrath upon Jesus and God the Father turns away, and Jesus is is going, “My God, why have you forsaken me?”

In fact, so many people are afraid to bring very sincere questions to god, and I would argue that sometimes a very important part our faith journey would be taking honest questions before God.

Here's where a lot of people are. What do you do when what you see with your eyes is so different from what you believe in your heart? This was Habakkuk's foundational challenge.

The Diagram - “The Dip”

Let me show you this diagram (SEE LAST PAGE). Let's say, this is a person who is without Christ. This may be you right now. Your a person that God is doing something in your life. You are here because God is reaching out to you and you are softening to him.

Now, at some point the Holy Spirit does something in your and then, “Okay, I do believe that Jesus is real and okay I believe in your son is the son of God and I surrender to you, and at that point, BOOM. Suddenly your life changes. I mean like Boom, you are different and you're excited and happy and you skyrocket to some sort of spiritual high.

- And suddenly God is answering your prayers.
- And your having all these “God coincidences.” And all your friends are wondering what happened to you. You're making changes in your life.
- You go to church and it like the message is “just for you.” And you get in your car and your favorite song pops on. And you pull into the mall and there's a parking lot space right in the front. And your flying with Jesus.

THEN...

- Now, before long, you go to church, and the sermon doesn't quite speak to you, and your like, “Oh, that's weird?”

- And you get in the car and you don't really like the song that playing.
- You pray. And instead of God doing what you ask, the opposite happens. "What's going on here!"
- And then one day, someone you love get's sick and doesn't get better. Or someone you love gets in a car accident and gets really messed up.

And you come to what Henry Blackaby calls, a Crisis of Belief. "Huh? God, now I thought we were here, but now, based on what I see, it's very different than what I thought, and I'm not sure what I believe right now."

Typically when this happens, people go in one of THREE directions.

One is they will **naïvely deny reality**. And say, "I want to go right back to where I was." In other words, the doctor says I'm sick, I say, "no, no, I'm not going to have a negative confession. I'm healed, by faith, I'm healed." If you lost your job. Oh, it doesn't matter, I'm just going to trust God to give me another job." And they go into this denial mode, positive thinking, I'm just going to go back to where I was. And I think that that is dangerous.

Two. Others though, they get mad and give up. "Okay. God I thought you were like this, but your not, so forget you." **And they go right back here.** "If this is going to be how it's going to be, and your not going to do what I thought you were going to do, then you must not be who I thought you were, so forget it God. I don't want to play anymore."

And right about now some of you may be thinking of someone. For others of you, it might be you. Because something happened. You got hurt. Someone did something to you. You got let down. God didn't answer your prayer. And you're thinking of throwing in the towel and go right back here.

What do you do when what you see isn't consistent with what you believe? And you're not sure what to think about God anymore?

Three. Well, you can go **this way**, you can go **this way**. OR you can go the more difficult road and say, "God I still going to trust you." And God may take you on a journey -- and let me just tell you this right now, it doesn't means thing are going to

necessarily get better at first. They might get worse, and it might get more painful, and you may even have more faith struggles. BUT, if you continue to stick with God no matter what he does around you, I can assure you that if you hold on to him, at some point **He's going to move your faith at some point to a new and higher level of intimacy, trust and security that you never, ever dreamed possible** -- if you're willing to go through the season of doubt.

In fact, everybody I know who is really, really intimate with God has been through this season.

The New Testament says it this way.

James 1:2-4 *²Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

God may lovingly are allow you to go through a season of doubts, questioning, fear, insecurities and unanswered questions because he'll do something in you that he couldn't do it any other way.

Some of you right now, you're right here. Where is this? **This is Chapter 1 of the book.** You don't know what you believe right now. You're in the middle of chapter 1. And please listen carefully, *too many people walk away from God in chapter 1.*

Let me tell you very plainly. Chapter 1 is all about **wondering**. "God where are you? What are you doing? And that can be a very important part of your faith journey. That's where Habakkuk was. "God what are you doing? I don't understand?" And God responded. And what God said was not what Habakkuk wanted to hear. Let's look at God's response:

Habakkuk 1:5-6 *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.*

⁶I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.

Habakkuk 1:7-9 *⁷They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. ⁸Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their*

cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour; ⁹they all come bent on violence. [Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.]

“Here’s the story Habakkuk. You’re bad, their much worse. And I know you hate them, but I’m going to use them to destroy you.”

And Habakkuk’s like, “Huh! That’s not right! We’re not that bad!”

What do you do when you’re in the middle of chapter 1, and you’re not sure what to believe? You want to continue to believe and follow, but you’ve got so many questions. Can you still be a deeply committed believe with a lot of questions? Write this down. I hope it will be a freeing word to many of you. **A deeply committed believer can express simultaneous questions and faith**. May that set you free. A deeply committed believer, at the same moment, can express simultaneous questions and faith.

“I believe - help me with my unbelief.”

Let me give you an example [put in notes]. Mark 9:20-29. About a father who had son with a evil spirit, from childhood. Father came and said, *Jesus can you do anything about this?* And Jesus said, *“Can I? All things are possible.”* And the father said, ***“I do believe. Help me overcome my unbelief.”***

“Jesus, you’ve got to understand. There was a time my faith was strong, real strong. But you got to understand, my son has been hurting for a long time. And I have prayed, and prayed, and fasted and fasted. I’ve taken him to every doctor and faith healer and he is still sick. I’ve been doing everything your Word tells me to do. And I have been believing, but right now it’s just not so easy, you see. I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!”

Basically Jesus, in this situation that God allowed, is saying, “Okay, I’m now going to do something you’re not going to believe, and it’s going to be so amazing that you’re not ever going to doubt in that way again. **But you would never have gotten there unless I’d taken you through this crisis of belief.**”

And this is exactly what’s going to happen with God and Habakkuk in these 3 chapters of the book.

And in v. 12-14, watch as Habakkuk has simultaneous doubt and faith.

Habakkuk 1:12-13¹²*O Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. (statement of faith) O Lord, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish. ¹³Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?*

“God I believe, but it’s difficult.” Some of you right now, like Habakkuk, you’re in Chapter 1.

Got bad news for you. Chapter 2 is not much better.

Chapter 1 - you’re Wondering

Chapter 2 - you’re Waiting (and waiting..)

Chapter 3 - if you continue to stick with God, you will come to a point, that no matter what you see around you, you will worship God, **not because of what you see, but because of WHO you know Him to Be**. Because of his character and nature.

CONCLUSION

So what do you do if you are in Chapter 1? You “do the Habakkuk.” Which is: You EMBRACE Him. You may even Wrestle with God.

That means no matter what’s going on around you, you “Habakkuk.” You hold on. You wrestle back and fourth and you may even say “I don’t understand” but you embrace him and you never let go.

Here’s where you’d like a nice story or poem and a nice ending that ties it all up - and I can’t give it to you. Because sometimes, in chapter 1, all you can do is embrace Him

Because no matter what happens, and I can’t promise you a better life, necessarily, but I can promise you this - He will never let go of you.

PRAYER - I want to specifically pray for those in chapter one. Give them the faith, even with doubts and questions, to hold on to you.

May some of you would say I'm facing things that don't make sense. I had a stronger faith once, but now I'm struggling with more doubts. Some of you can say, yeah I really do believe, but I'm in chapter one - would you pray that God will help me get to chapter 3. (hands) PRAYER.

GOD IS NOT FAIR (there's another side). He's absolutely just, but he's not fair. That's why is called the Gospel. Truth we all have a sin nature and we sin. And a just God will punish sin. If he was completely fair you would have to pay for your sin.

But because although he's just, he is not fair, to you, you don't have to pay the penalty for you sins if you choose to put you faith in the one he sent for you - his son Jesus Christ.

God poured out his wrath on Jesus and if you put you trust and faith in him - you will be spiritually born anew and you sin is forgiven and you will be entirely different. Heavenbound. His purpose on earth.

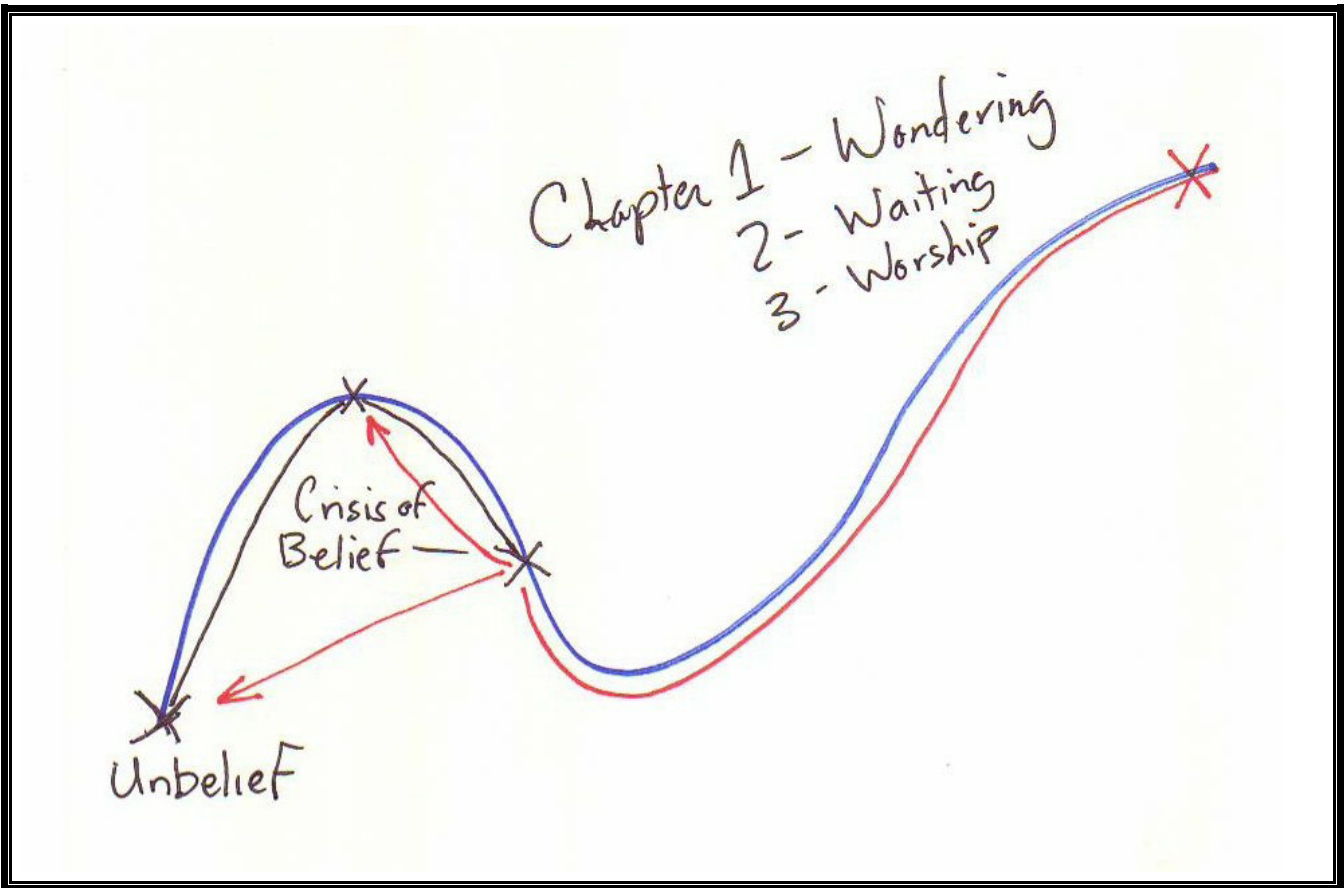
I just want to tell you it doesn't mean you have more money, good health and a bigger house. Because that's not what it means to follow Jesus - it means more than that. It means your life is going to count for the glory of God. And it may get worse before it gets better. But it doesn't matter because your life counts and your following God.

If God bought you here for this moment and you can sense it and you know it. Time to cross over the line and say "Jesus I believe you are the son of God. I surrender my life to you. Take me forgive me of my sins. I give it all to you. I give my life to you."

Would you lift your hands high right now if you know that's you today...

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father save me from my sins, forgive me, make me new. I believe Jesus died for me. Help me live for you. Fill me with your spirit so I can follow you. For the rest of my life I am yours. Thank you or new life. And now you have mine. In Jesus name I pray.



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