



First Baptist Pulpit

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When You're In the Dip

Habakkuk 2

"Your honor I object! Objection, your honor." After watching all those lawyers on TV, I've always wanted to say that. But I'm not a lawyer, so I cannot object. *And I'm a Christian so I cannot be a lawyer.* Just joking.

We're in the middle of the series in the book of Habakkuk[1]. Which is one of the 12 minor prophets from the Old Testament. Habakkuk is a name which means *"to embrace or to wrestle."* And it's a book which is written about the year 600 B.C. or so, and God told Habakkuk to tell his people, "because of their wickedness I'm going to destroy them." And chances are, Habakkuk might've said, "Well you're right they are, and that seems relatively fair." But God added a twist at the end and said "but I'm going to destroy these people with the Babylonians." And Habakkuk said, "Huh? hang on a second. You're going to raise up whom?"

Because you see, the Babylonians were far more wicked than the Israelites were and Habakkuk basically said, "I object! Your honor."

And the book is written in basically judicial language, and what is really going on here is Habakkuk is basically saying to God, "God, you know I'm going to honor you, but I'm going to take you to court, because things are not just. God, what you're doing just does not seem fair."

Today if you're facing something and you say "I don't understand God. You could do something about this. If I were you I would, but your not... I don't understand?"

If you're facing something like that today, or one day, then the book of Habakkuk will speak to you"

The question were going to wrestle with today it is **"what you do when you're in the dip?"** It looks something like this {draw the dip}. We looked last week at a **beginning point**- someone who does not yet know Christ. And one day God reveals himself to that person and their born anew. They are spiritually reborn in then their world is turned upside down and right side up. There is a huge spiritual rush of adrenaline and excitement and got starts answering prayers and whenever they pull up to the stop light, all the stop lights turn green, and God is just smiling upon them, and it's just that high that a person experiences when they meet Christ.

THEN unfortunately, life continues and then that Christian may/will unfortunately experience tougher times (and end up right here).

- Maybe God doesn't answer a prayer the way they thought he would.
- Or perhaps they lose a job.
- Or maybe they started to struggle with certain sins that came back and won leave them alone.
- Or maybe their kids started to make bad decisions.
- Or maybe there's something that they felt that God could do, or should do, but didn't and all of a sudden they're here, and they enter into what Henry Blackaby calls a "Crisis of Belief". And all of a sudden, they're here, when they thought they were here.

AND one of two common reactions tends to occur.

The first is that the person wants to go back to their last spiritual high. Goes into a form of denial. Basically, "I just want to pretend that it's not happening." and if we can just go back to this point, then everything is going to be okay.

Or, they say "God, if you're not going to do what I thought you were going to do, then forget about

you God, and I'm going to go back here." Gives up on God.

We learned last week that the name of Habakkuk means to "embrace or wrestle." If this person who comes to a point of crisis in their faith, if they continue to embrace God. But this believer can, even though it may not get better at first, this person can grow much closer to God than they were in the past.

In fact, if you look at those who are closest to God, you'll often notice that they have gone through these difficult times and God has found himself faithful.

What you do when you're in the dip? We'll let the book of Habakkuk speak to us about **three specific things** that we can do when you're in the dip. These three things will come from the first three verses of the Habakkuk, chapter 2.

Here's what Habakkuk says. He's just heard from God about God's plan to use the evil Babylonians. and so he says, "Okay, here's my plan..."

Habakkuk 2:1-3 *¹I 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.*

²Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. ³For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

What you do, when you you're in the dip?. Will you do when you're struggling, and you know that God could do something, but he doesn't seem to be doing anything? When life just doesn't make sense. What do you do when you're struggling?

I. THE FIRST THING WE'VE LEARN TO DO IS WE STOP AND LISTEN.

In fact if you look at What a Habakkuk did, he complained and says "God I don't like what you're doing." And in this, God seems to respectfully hear this, seemingly saying, "It's OK, you're allowed to question me." Then now Habakkuk says "God I've stated my case. I object! And now I'm waiting for

you to reply. I need some answers. God, what you have to say for yourself? "

Verse one. *¹I 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.*

Too many of us, we just whine to God, and then just go about our lives. And we never stop and LISTEN to see what God might say back to us. GOD, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?"

You see, here's the neat thing. Our God is a relational God, and he loves to relate to his children. and if we stop to LISTEN God will often speak to you. How will he speak? All sorts of different ways.

- God can speak audibly. I've never heard his audible voice.
- God can also speak to us through his word. God can also speak to circumstances, through other people. God can speak to you.
- And sometimes he WON'T. Because God is God.

Another thing. When God does speak, you may not like what he says. Habakkuk's not going to like it. It's not, "oh that's just what I was looking for God." No.

But if you listen and hear Him speak, you'll know exactly where God stands.

So you stop and say, "God I don't understand? I don't like it. This doesn't make sense. Speak." and more often than not, God will speak to you.

Now, if he says something that you don't like, you know where you stand, and you know what God us up to.

New Testament. Paul had a thorn in his flesh than three times Paul asked God to take it away. he pleaded with him three times... "God, take it away. God, take it away. God, please take it away." And he listens and God then said, "No, I could, I'm not going to take it away." Now this isn't exactly the answer Paul was looking for, you think?

Why? Because I'm going to do something even better than taking it away. And you may not understand, but I'm going to teach you that my grace is all that you need. You see, I could do that. But I'm not going to, because I'm going to do something different inside of you.

When you don't understand. And you're in the dip. You stop, listen, and let God speak to you.

II. THE SECOND THING YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE IN THE DIP, IT IS YOU WRITE.

You write what God shows you. Habakkuk says, "God where are you? What are you doing?" and God says, "you want to know Habakkuk. Take notes."

Habakkuk 2:2 ²*Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.*

Why does God want us to write it down? Well, what he's going to say to Habakkuk, years later, when I prove myself just and true, I wanted in writing so everyone can see that I am a God of my word.

Now it's also for us too, because if you're like me, when you're on the way to the grocery store and you have only two things to remember to get, 50% of the time when I get there I can't remember what one of them is. 25% of the time I can't remember either of them. So Nina knows to write it down.

So you want to write down what God says, because the enemy is an expert at stealing the truth that God wants to plants. God may show you something.

I can't tell you how many times this happen to me, and I'm wrestling with something, and I don't understand, and I'm praying, god I don't understand. what are you doing? And I'm praying and, God reveals something, and okay, that was obviously from God. And if I don't write it down, like an hour later, I think that was *probably* from God. And week later now I'm not sure if it was from God of all. The sense that God has spoken seems to vanish if I don't write it down.

When I read it down though, it becomes a spiritual anchor. I believe God has spoken and this is it.

The story of church and building... got didn't fulfill it for three years....

First you stop and you listen. God what he is saying? God what are you doing? Then if he shows you anything at all, document it, record it. Write it down.

III. THE THIRD THING THAT YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE IN THE DIP, YOU WAIT.

(Long pause.) Awkward isn't it?

We're so into instant return, instant gratification, and we don't like to wait. We don't want to wait, but look what God says to the prophet in verse three:

Habakkuk 2:3 ³*For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.*

When God says something, you may have to wait a while, but you can take it to the bank.

Some of you, right now, you're in the "waiting zone". you believe God has shown you something. You recorded it. And now you're waiting, and you're waiting, and you're waiting, and you're afraid that God will not bring it to pass. Remember, *God's delays are not God's denials.*

If you look through scripture you can see example after example after example of people that God would promise something, and then they would wait.

- **MOSES.** God says, "I'm going to use you to deliver my people and rebuild the nation. And Moses then goes on a 40 year wandering tour. 40 years. That's like 200 and something dog years. 40 years. What does he do? Wait and wait and wait and wait.
- **JOSEPH.** God says "You're going to be a great leader." what happens? His brothers beat the snot out of him. Throw him into a pit. Sold him into to slavery. And it's years before God fulfills his promise and elevates him to the second-highest person in Egypt.
- **PAUL.** God says, "I'm going to make you a great apostle." What happens? its 13 years before he ever does anything for God.

Sometimes you just wait. Now here's what happens. When people are waiting and they're right here, they often times think nothing is happening. there is no movement.

What does a waiter do? A waiter serves. Guess what you do when you're waiting? You're serving the Lord the whole time. It doesn't mean there's no movement, in fact there may be more movement than there was before. You're serving the Lord, whatever you do you do it on to the glory of God. You continue to wait on him. You continue to serve him and wait on him and serve him and wait on him.

And at the *appointed time.* The Hebrew word for appointed time is "mow-ed". If you're taking

notes, write this down. It means an appointment or a fixed time. At the "appointed time" it is coming.

It's like when a woman is pregnant. When it's time, it's time. It's time! On baby number three, when Katelyn was born... it was time.

When it is the *appointed time*, that means there is nothing you can do to speed it up, because it's God's time, and there's nothing anyone can do to slow it down either. Because it's God's time. Wait for it. Wait for it.

You want to know how long Habakkuk waited for it? A long, long, long time. In fact most of the people in his generation didn't see it. It happened in the next generation when God's promise was fulfilled.

- Even if you don't see God's promise fulfilled, they will be fulfilled, because God's Word is absolutely true.

Some of you right now, you're in "the waiting zone," the dip. And you believe God has promised you something, but you don't see it yet. I want to read you this verse again, but from the Living Bible, and I really pray will speak encouragement to you...

Habakkuk 2:3 *³But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day!*

God says, Habakkuk, do this. Listen, I'm going to speak to you. Take notes, and then wait. And what God's going to say is, "I understand the Babylonians are bad. And you think they need to get there's too. Well they're going to. When I'm ready, they're going to get it, and it's going to be good.

It's like when I was young, and I did something really bad and my mother would say, "Wait to your dad gets home." Did that ever happen to you? It would scare me to death.

And basically this is what God is saying. "You just wait, because I am a just God, and they will get the punishment for their sins too." And here's how he says it in verse 4...

Habakkuk 2:4a *⁴"See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright..."* we don't need to follow God's rules, God stuff doesn't apply to us.

And then, if you skip ahead, we're going to be looking at versus 6-19. you can read this on your own time, but what you're going to find is that God very boldly issues **five woes to Babylon**.

And he says, "I know what they're doing, and to tell you exactly how I'm going to punish them." (I'll just give you the high points)

Verse 6 God is speaking to the thieves

Verse 9 - to the cheaters or deceivers

Verse 12 - to the violent ones

Verse 15 - he's talking to the partygoers.

Verse 19 - to the idolaters - those who believe that their meaning is going to come from the things of this world.

God says, "In my time, wait for it, and you will see that my punishment is absolutely just. And they will get what's due to them. Wait for it. Wait for it. My word is good, says the Lord"

Let's go back and look at Habakkuk 2:4b - this is considered by many to be the key verse the book.

Habakkuk 2:4a *⁴"See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright.*

— but the righteous will live by his faith—

How are the righteous, those who follow Him going to live? The righteous will live, not by what they see, or what's going on around them, but the righteous will live by faith.

What will they have faith in? They will absolutely have faith in whatever God has said. What they have recorded. And they will have faith to wait on God to fulfill his promises even one life looks like it's going down word and when it doesn't make sense. And even when others say your God, he's not coming through for you. The righteous will live by faith. That God will be true to his word.

If you ever want be built up by your faith, I encourage you to read Hebrews 11, the Faith Chapter and it will go through people who live by faith.

Here's a little of it...(my own words)

- By faith we believe that the world was formed at God's command.
- By faith Noah built an ark to save his family.

- By faith Abraham and Sarah, though past the age of childbearing God brought them as sung by faith.
- By faith Abraham brought his son Isaac to the altar, and then God said know you don't have to do this Abraham because by faith you brought him and now I provide a substitute.
- By faith that people of God marched around the walls of Jericho and the walls came tumbling down.
- By faith people of God walk through the Red Sea and we're not even wet while the Egyptians drowned. they did this by faith.

The righteous, the just live by faith. Question. *How will the people of God will live today?* Will live by faith.

- So if God promised you a child and you cannot conceive, you believe by faith that God will bring it about. Maybe it will be by birth, or by adoption, but you continue to believe by faith.
- Whenever you're trying to be a faithful giver and you don't know if you have enough money to make it to the end of the month, what should be in obedience to God's Word, by faith you believe that God will be your provider.
- When your marriage seems to be falling apart, and some people tell you, you ought to get a divorce, will say "No, I remember the vows and I made, and by faith I remember all things are possible with God."
- When your children are making very bad decisions, you believe by faith that God is working in their lives to those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

You live by faith. You don't walk by what you see. You walk by faith.

Now, what happens when you're living by faith, and in your lifetime you still don't see what you believe God promised? Heb. 11:35 & 39

There's three words you have to hold on to and you never let go of these three words. If you want, no matter what, to be drawn closer to God, the three words you hold onto on your journey toward ultimate intimacy and alter the trust and faith will be the words "*but the Lord.*" And you'll find these words in Verse 20 of Chapter 2 when Habakkuk

says, "even though I don't understand it, even though I don't like it, and even though I don't want to believe this is what's going to happen, *but the Lord is in his holy temple*, but the Lord he is in charge, but the Lord is righteous and good. Even though I don't see anything I want to see, but the Lord is in his holy temple and he says *let all the earth be silent before him*. But the Lord is in his holy temple.

It's like Shadrach, Meshack & Abednego. "I believe God is going to deliver us, but even if he doesn't, we will not bow down. Because we will live by faith."

CONCLUSION

What you do when you're in the dip?

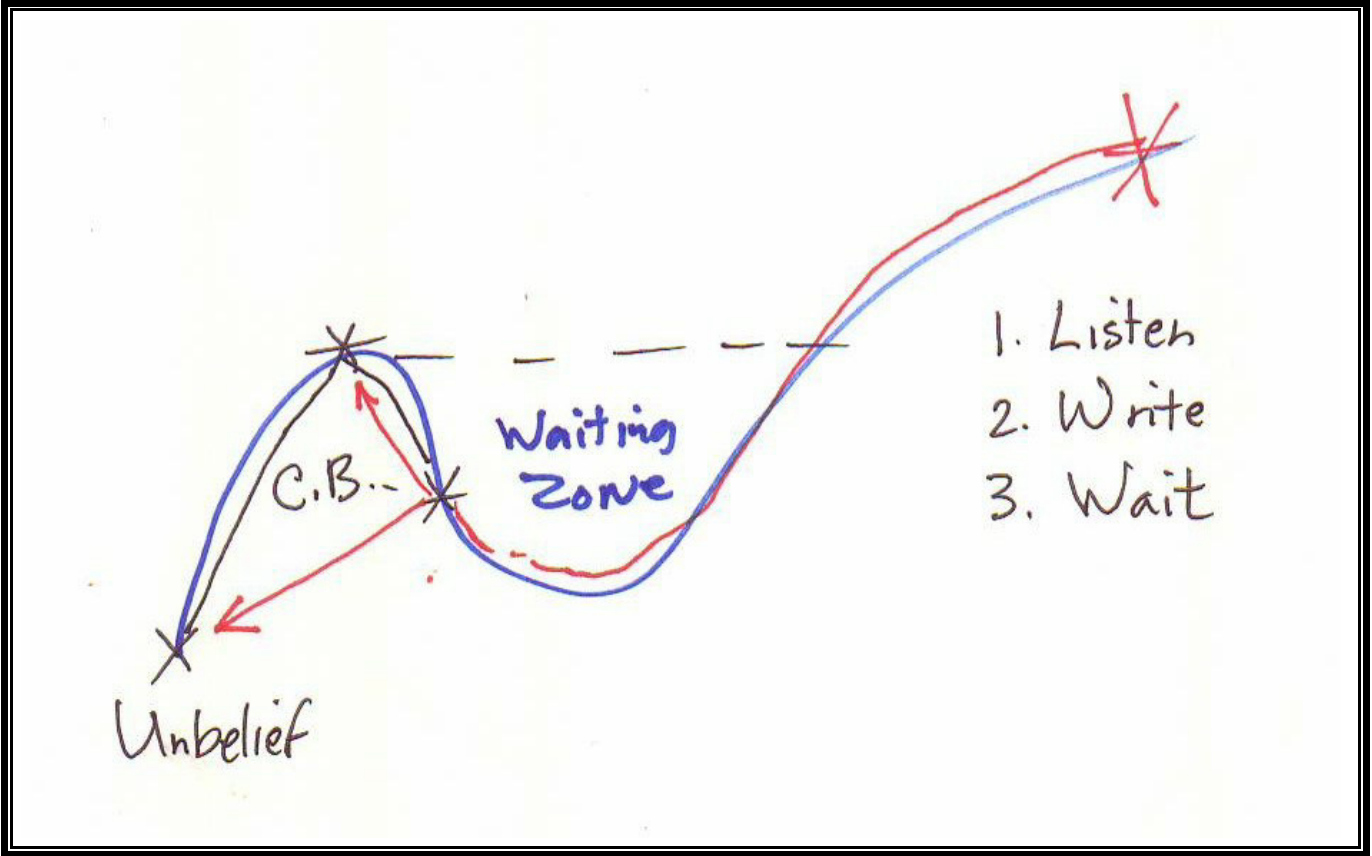
You listen. You write it down. You wait.

And everything in you, you live by faith, because the Lord is in his holy temple.

PRAYER:

I want to pray right now for God minister to those in the dip today that HE would bring life, power and victory. (Bow, close eyes).

sermon series. I found it so good personally that I chose to share it, with only minor adaptations, with my congregation.



Unbelief

C.B.

Waiting Zone

1. Listen
2. Write
3. Wait