



## A Spiritual Encouragement Message April 17, 2020

### Rejoicing with Habakkuk!

**“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted” (Hab. 1:1-4).**

The **“law is paralyzed”** says Habakkuk! “Justice NEVER goes forth!” Doesn’t that sound oh so familiar to our current plight? He continues, **“The wicked surround the righteous”**. What else are we dealing with? If I were to say this in a prayer today without referencing the scripture, how many people would rightfully assume these were my words about America? People haven’t changed...

However, Habakkuk closes his message with this beautiful proclamation:

**“I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places” (Hab. 3:18-19).**

Now, how does a man go from questioning God in the beginning of his work with, **“why do you idly look at wrong?”**, to praising God at the end of his message with the beautiful statement of, **“I will rejoice in the Lord”**? Because I think it’s safe to say that many of us have questioned God. How many of us have made it back to praising God?

Interestingly enough, “Habakkuk” means, “wrestler”. When we read through the book, we see Habakkuk’s wrestling match with God. His questions arise due to the fact that the “people of God”, the Israelites, were destitute. These same people who had been chosen by God were now in complete disarray. The Northern Kingdom had been decimated by Assyria and was scattered among the nations. The Southern Kingdom was wicked and sinful, not far from the coming destruction of Babylon. For all intents and purposes, the people of God looked more cursed than blessed. Quite frankly, according to their Deuteronomic vows (**Deut. 27-28**), they were!

Now imagine seeing the people of God scattered about. Some were rebellious and sinful, some were oppressed and hurting. The people of God looked like the worst kind of people on the earth. Can we see why Habakkuk was questioning God's concern for them?

Thankfully, the book of Habakkuk is not simply Habakkuk crying out to God. It is a book in which we are blessed to read God's response. In chapter 2, God brings comfort to Habakkuk by saying that the proud nation of Babylon will indeed fall by the sword. All unrighteous nations eventually do! Yet, he also tells Habakkuk that Babylon is doing His work! **(Hab. 1:5-6)** Sure, that reassurance brings a sense of comfort, but note what God says to Habakkuk that resonates with us due to our theme this year:

**“The righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab. 2:4)**

Recall with me that “faith” is the evidence of things hoped for, the conviction of the unseen **(Heb. 11:1)**. Habakkuk could only see the destitution of Israel. He could only see Babylon destroying nations. He could only see sadness, sorrow, and despair. Yet, God gave him HOPE. He gave him hope by assuring him that He is still in charge. That God will always be in control, and that His plan is working. All it took for Habakkuk to go from depression and despair to hope and joy was a reminder that God is in control. No matter the circumstances, God has had a plan from the beginning. His plan has always been, and will always be, about saving mankind. Regardless of the turmoil we face on this earth, God is in control and he will lift us up! I pray that we can rejoice with Habakkuk for the very same reason! I love you, and God Bless!

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