

# Would You Do It Again, Lord?

GOD QUESTIONS #4 - Pastor Gary Combs - February 25, 2024 - Habakkuk 3:1-15

**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're continuing today with part four of our sermon series entitled, "GOD QUESTIONS: An Exposition of Habakkuk." We're going verse by verse through the little book written by the prophet Habakkuk. It may be a little book, only 3 chapters, but it asks really big questions, the kind of questions about God that we all struggle with from time to time. Habakkuk may have been writing around 600 years before Christ, but his questions are just as relevant today as they were then.

As we covered the first two chapters, we saw that Habakkuk cried out to the Lord asking, "How long, Lord? Why Lord? Where are you, Lord?" He was struggling, but he was still faithful to lift all his questions and complaints up to the Lord in a kind of prayer of lament.

What is a prayer of lament? It's a kind of prayer that hurting and grieving believers pray to God, asking their questions and making their complaints, but in the end, declaring their faith and praise.

Living by faith is the key verse in Habakkuk:

Habakkuk 2:4 (ESV) ... but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Because while Habakkuk had many questions and complaints, he lifted them all up to the Lord by faith. And now as we look at Habakkuk chapter 3, we'll see that his lament is turning into faithful praise. As Mark Vroegop writes:

"Lament is a pathway to praise when life gets hard." — Mark Vroegop, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*

Even when life doesn't make sense and God seems far away, we can lament, crying out our questions and complaints to God, believing that He is good and that He will cause all things to come together for good in the end.

**Need:** Are you hurting today? Are you dealing with grief from a broken relationship? From a lost loved one? Are struggling with a situation that makes you question whether God cares? And if He does, why doesn't He act? Or maybe the life you always dreamed of and the life you're actually living are a hundred miles apart and you wonder why God doesn't intervene? Like, "God, I see all those miracles and great and mighty works You did in the Bible. Would You do it again, Lord in my life?"

**Trans:** Would you like to know how to lift up your griefs, your hurts, even your hard questions to God in lament, so that your pain turns into praise? Well that's what today's message is about...

**BODY:** In the book of Habakkuk, when the prophet lifted his cry to the Lord by faith, it turned his lament into praise. We can cry out to the Lord by faith to see our lament turned into praise. How can we see our lament turn into praise? The text gives three ways we can see our lament turn into praise.

**Text:** Habakkuk 3:1-15 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. <sup>2</sup> O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. <sup>3</sup> God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. <sup>4</sup> His brightness was like the light; rays flashed from his hand; and there he veiled his power. <sup>5</sup> Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. <sup>6</sup> He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations; then the eternal mountains were scattered; the everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. <sup>7</sup> I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. <sup>8</sup> Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers, or your indignation against the sea, when you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? <sup>9</sup> You stripped the sheath from your bow, calling for many arrows. Selah You split the earth with rivers. <sup>10</sup> The mountains saw you and writhed; the raging waters swept on; the deep gave forth its voice; it lifted its hands on high. <sup>11</sup> The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped, at the flash of your glittering spear. <sup>12</sup> You marched through the earth in fury; you threshed the nations in anger. <sup>13</sup> You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck. Selah <sup>14</sup> You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors, who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret. <sup>15</sup> You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging of mighty waters.

## OUR LAMENT TURNS INTO PRAISE WHEN WE...

### 1. Worship God for who He is.

**EXP:** (1-2) Look at v.2: "O Lord, I have heard the report of you, ... O Lord, do I fear." Habakkuk begins his prayer with worshiping God for who He is. The word fear might also be "awe." As in...

Habakkuk 3:2 (NIV) Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy.

**"Prayer" (1)** - Habakkuk concludes his prayer of lament with a prayer of praise.

**"According to shigionoth" (1)** - Unsure meaning, but perhaps a musical term ("wild, passionate song, with rapid changes of rhythm" – *Strongs*). The chapter closes with instructions for the director of music and mentions stringed instruments. So, Hab. 3 is not only a prayer, but a psalm that was meant to be sung.

**"Report of You" (2)** (נִשְׁמָעָה *shêma*) - Lit., "something heard." Report, fame, speech. "Lord, you're famous!"

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“Fear” (2) (אָרַאַר *yârê*) - to fear, stand in awe of, revere, honor, respect. By implication to worship in awe.

**ARG:** Give God the glory and worship due Him.

Psalm 29:2 (ESV) Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

**Set your hearts and minds on things above where your true life already is.**

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV) <sup>1</sup> Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**ILL:**

**APP:** Our lament turns into praise when we seek the Lord’s face before seeking His hand. When we lift our eyes and hearts to Him in worship, our temporary tears are lifted up to His eternal joy.

## 2. Remember what God has done.

**EXP:** (2, 3-15) Look at v. 2 again. “O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work.” Habakkuk remembered all that God had done in the past for Israel.

“Your work” (2) (פִּעֲלֵי *pô’al*) - work, deed, doing, a thing done. Habakkuk had heard the report of God’s work and now he begins to list some of them. Indeed, verses 3-15 might be described as a psalm of remembrance, a kind of “collage... a blending of the songs of Moses, Deborah, and David” (Barker, NAC #20, p.352) into one psalm. Verses 3-15 describe a “theophany” (“an appearance of God in great power and glory”). Of course, we can’t see God, but we can see His works and His activity...

(3-4) God’s majesty displayed in Sinai (Teman and Mt. Paran are in the Sinai region of Edom).

(5) God’s plague on those who grumbled against Moses in Num. 16 (After Korah’s rebellion).

(6-7) the conquest of Canaan (Israel moved through Cushan and Midian from Sinai).

(8-9a) God’s parting of the Red Sea (Ex. 14), or parting of Jordan River (Josh. 3)

(9b-10) God brought forth water from the rock (Ex. 17)

(11) God’s solar miracle at Gibeon where Joshua defeated the Amorites (Josh.10).

(12-15) From the description of God in the natural world, Habakkuk moves to its inhabitants and the enemies of Israel and how God fought as a warrior for Israel’s salvation.

**ARG:** Remembering what God has done leads us to praise.

Psalm 77:11-13 (ESV) <sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. <sup>12</sup> I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. <sup>13</sup> Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?

**The Lord Jesus has taught us to remember what He has done for us.**

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

**ILL:** When I remember how far God has brought our church, I am filled with thanksgiving and hope and joy.

**APP:** Our lament turns into praise when we remember what God has done for us in the past, so we are able to trust that He will continue to act on our behalf according to His purpose.

# Would You Do It Again, Lord?

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## 3. Trust that God is working now.

**EXP:** (2, 13) Look at v.2 again: “revive it... make it known.” In other words, “Would You do it again, Lord? I’ve seen You and Your great works in the past. Would You do it again?”

“**Revive**” (2) (חַיָּה, *hāyâ*) - to quicken, revive, refresh. In other words, repeat Your works of old in our day.

“**Wrath**” (2,8) (רִגְזָה, *rôgez*) - anger, rage, wrath. Divine wrath is the right and righteous response of God to sin. His wrath is in perfect harmony with all of his divine attributes. God formed humanity to bring him glory. Yet, because we rebelled against his holy standard, the perfect judge of the universe has declared he will pour out his wrath upon those who have sinned against him without repentance or faith in his Son.

“**Mercy**” (2) (רַחֲמֵי, *râcham*) - to love, be compassionate, merciful. God’s mercy, as expressed in the gospel, is what declares the wicked righteous by means of Christ’s wrath-bearing sacrifice. Habakkuk asked God to make His wrath known, but in it to “remember mercy.” God has answered this prayer in Jesus.

“**Salvation**” (8, 13 - 3x) (יְשׁוּעָה, *yeshua*) - deliverance, salvation, rescue

“**Anointed**” (13) (מָשִׁיחַ, *māšîaḥ* - masculine singular) - Lit., “messiah.” “Anointed meant chosen of God for a particular purpose... In this context the term has multiple meanings. In reference to the exodus it would most likely point to Moses. But in Habakkuk’s day it referred to God’s anointed people in general and hoped for king/deliverer in particular. In the context of sacred canon it looked forward to Messiah, fulfilled in the life, suffering, death, resurrection, and salvation of Jesus of Nazareth” (Barker, NAC #20, p.369).

### **ARG:** Two Bible reasons this pas

John 5:17 (NLT) But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.”

**APP:** How can we trust that God is working right now, asking Him to revive and renew His works of old? **1) We can pray for personal and corporate revival.** Pray for revival in your own heart first. Pray that God would give you an ever-increasing faith in him and love for him. Pray that God would give you a burning desire for holiness, to see God glorified in all areas of your life. Pray for revival in the church and in the community. **2) Pray for God in His wrath to remember mercy.** In praying this, we are asking God to judge sin, which is something He will do anyway, but we’re agreeing with Him. While at the same time, ask God to show mercy by bringing lost people to saving faith in Jesus.

**ILL:** "Way Maker" is a contemporary worship song written by Nigerian gospel singer Sinach

Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper	Even when I don't see it, You're working
Light in the darkness	Even when I don't feel it, You're working
My God, that is who You are	You never stop, You never stop working

**CONCLUSION:** Would You do it again, Lord? Would You do a work in us today? In our church? In our city? In our world? Stretch forth Your hand, Lord and shake this people, this place and do what only You can do!

When we ...

- 1) Worship God for who He is,
- 2) Remember what God has done,
- 3) And Trust that God is working now...

... It turns our lament into praise!

Let’s pray.