

I'm Trusting You Anyway, Lord!

GOD QUESTIONS #5 - Pastor Gary Combs - March 3, 2024 - Habakkuk 3:16-19

INTRO: Good morning church! We're concluding today with part five of our sermon series entitled, "GOD QUESTIONS: An Exposition of 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 BC, but his questions are just as relevant today as they were then.

As we've gone through this book, we've seen how Habakkuk cried out to the Lord asking questions like: "How long, Lord? Why Lord? Where are you, Lord? Would You do it again, 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.

Because even though Habakkuk asks God a lot of hard questions, he is still a man of faith. Indeed, the theme and the key verse in Habakkuk is:

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

This verse is quoted as a background basis in what is generally considered the three greatest doctrinal books of faith in the New Testament: Romans (1:17), Galatians (3:11), and Hebrews (10:38).

As J. Vernon McGee said of Habakkuk, "This little book may have opened up in gloom, but it closes in glory. It may have begun with a question mark, but it closes with an exclamation point!"

That's why we didn't title this sermon with a question, but with an exclamation. It's because ultimately, this little book is about trusting God no matter what trouble or concern you're facing today! It's about saying, "I'm trusting You anyway, Lord!"

Need: What are you facing today? It seems easy to keep the faith when life is good, when all your prayers are being answered, and everything is coming up roses. But how do we keep trusting God when life gets hard? When our prayers seem to go unanswered? When our worst fears seem to be coming true?

Trans: How can we keep trusting the Lord anyway?

BODY: In Habakkuk 3:16-19, after hearing the Lord's plan to use Babylon to discipline Judah, the prophet concluded his little book of lament with a strong resolve to trust the Lord anyway. We can resolve to trust the Lord anyway. How can we resolve to trust the Lord anyway? The text gives three ways we can resolve to trust the Lord anyway.

Text: Habakkuk 3:16-19 (ESV) ¹⁶ I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. ¹⁷ Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ God, the LORD, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

WE CAN RESOLVE TO TRUST THE LORD ANYWAY BY...

1. Resting on His promises when we are afraid.

EXP: (16) Notice Habakkuk's "I" statements. He says, "I hear..." And he says, "I will quietly wait." He heard God's plan to use Babylon as His instrument to discipline Judah, which caused him to tremble in fear. "Yet," he was resolved to "wait," or as the NKJV translates it:

Habakkuk 3:16 (NKJV) ... That I might rest in the day of trouble.

"**I will quietly wait**" (16) (נוח, *nûah*) - To rest, settle down and be quiet, to wait. Habakkuk has predetermined to rest in God, he has made up his mind in advance to abide in the Lord no matter what.

"**I hear**" (16) (שמע, *šāma*) - to hear, to have already heard. The prophet returned to his fearful response on hearing the Lord's plan to use Babylon to discipline Judah.

"**Body trembles**" (16) - The prophet described his fearful response to the news he'd heard: "body trembles...lips quiver...rottenness (weakness) entered his bones... legs trembled."

"**Day of trouble**" (16) (יום צרה, *yôm šārâ*) - day of adversity, affliction, tribulation, trouble. He was not waiting on his day of trouble, but that of the Babylonian invaders, whom God promised to judge in the end.

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ARG: Resting in the Lord is quietly and patiently waiting without worrying.

Psalm 37:7 (NKJV) Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Resting in Him, we rest in His promises and declare our faith to overcome fear.

Psalm 56:4 (NLT) I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?

ILL: Jesus rested in the storm and calls us to rest in Him: Mark 4:37-41 (ESV) ³⁷ And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. ³⁸ But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹ And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" ⁴¹ And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

APP: What a transformation happened in Habakkuk! He went from asking "How long?" To "I will quietly wait." When we are afraid, we can keep trusting in the Lord by resting in His promises. We can rest anyway!

2. Rejoicing in His salvation when we face life's trials.

EXP: (17-18) Habakkuk continued his "I" statements saying, "I will rejoice... I will take joy" (18). "Though" (17) the fig trees, grape vines, olive trees, the wheat and barley fields, and the flocks and herds "yield no food" (17), Habakkuk is determined to rejoice in the Lord anyway!

"**Though... no food**" (17) - Habakkuk is preparing himself for all provisions to be lost to the Babylonians. Three categories of food: Perennial crops: figs, grapes, olives; Annual crops: wheat and barley; Livestock: sheep, goats, cattle; would be devastated by the Babylonians.

"**I will rejoice**" (18) (רָצַח, *ālaz*) - (In the cohortative, has the effect of expressing personal resolve; like the Greek middle imperative). To exult, rejoice, triumph. "Though all outward means of support should fail, yet will I still have a firm confidence in the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God, that he will preserve me, and supply me with all things necessary." - Benson

"**LORD**" (18, 19) (יהוה, *Yəhōvā*) - Yahweh, Jehovah = "the self-existent One," God's covenant name.

"**I will take joy**" (18) (גִּיל, *gīl*) - Qal Cohortative; to rejoice, exult, be glad.

"**God of my salvation**" (18) (אלהיִם יְשׁוּעָה, *'ēlohîm yēša*) - God of my deliverance, salvation, rescue.

ARG: We can count life's trials as joy, knowing that God is at work testing and growing our faith.

James 1:2-4 (ESV) ² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We can rejoice because we "know" that God will cause everything to work together for our good.

Romans 8:28 (NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

ILL: The mother who counts it joy to give birth to a baby.

APP: When we face life's trials, we can count it all joy. We can rejoice in the God of our salvation. For He has saved us from sin's penalty and He is saving us from sin's power and He will save us from sin's presence. If you are a believer in Jesus today, God is sanctifying you making you like Jesus. So rejoice anyway!

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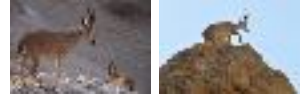
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3. Relying on His strength when we are down.

EXP: (2, 13) Finally, Habakkuk concluded with a final implied "I" statement saying, I will rely on the Lord God as "my strength."

"Strength" (19) (חַיִל, *hayil*) - strength, might. The LORD God was Habakkuk's source of strength.

"Feet like the deer's" (19) - The feet of the deer are swift, agile, and surefooted. The Nubian Ibex that inhabits the Judea desert, especially found in the cliffs of En Gedi, was no doubt what Habakkuk had in mind. These animals are the smallest of the ibex family, but they display amazing strength and agility.



"Tread on my high places" (19) - Both security and communion with God. God can lift you up to a place of victory and oversight. "The "high places" are called "mine," to imply that Israel shall be restored to his own land, a land of hills which are places of safety and of eminence." (JFB)

ARG: **God is both the Rock on which we stand and the Strength that lifts us up to the heights!**

Psalm 18:31-33 (NLT) ³¹ For who is God except the Lord? Who but our God is a solid rock? ³² God arms me with strength, and he makes my way perfect. ³³ He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights.

ILL: Did you ever read the devotional classic by Hannah Hunard called *Hinds Feet On High Places*? The word "hind" is an old English word for a female deer. The book, written in 1955, is an allegory, similar to Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan. "It is the story of a young woman named Much Afraid, and her journey away from her Fearing family and into the High Places of the Shepherd, guided by her two companions Sorrow and Suffering. It aims to show how a Christian is transformed from an immature believer to mature believer, who walks daily with God as easily on the High Places of Joy in the spirit as in the daily life of mundane and often humiliating tasks that may cause Christians to lose perspective" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hinds'_Feet_on_High_Places).



Let's listen in to one of the conversations between young woman Much Afraid and the Shepherd:

"O Shepherd. You said you would make my feet like hinds' feet and set me upon High Places".

"Well", he answered "the only way to develop hinds' feet is to go by the paths which the hinds use."

APP: Are you feeling down in strength and "much afraid" today? Rely on the Lord for strength. Like Much Afraid, we learn to rely on the Lord's strength by actually moving and climbing on His paths. We grow in reliance as we go in faith. We grow as we go.

CONCLUSION: Did you hear the words from the song before the sermon? **"Hallelujah Anyway"**

"Even if my daylight never dawns, Even if my breakthrough never comes, Even if I'll fight to bring You praise
Even if my dreams fall to the ground, Even if I'm lost, I know I'm found, Even if my heart will somehow say
Hallelujah anyway"

That's where Habakkuk ended up. After all the many questions and concerns he had for God, in the end, he decided to live by faith saying, "God, I'm going to say hallelujah anyway! I'm going to trust You anyway, Lord!"

Today, will you decide to ...

- 1) Rest in God's promises when you are afraid?
- 2) Rejoice in God's salvation when you face life's trials?
- 3) Rely on God's strength when you are feeling down?

Crying out to the Lord as Habakkuk did, He turns our pain into praise, our gloom into glory, and our sorrow into shouts of joy!

Let's pray.