

Habakkuk

by David Pawson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Old Testament and the relevance of Habakkuk's story to Christians today, highlighting the importance of interrogatory prayer and looking at the big view to understand God's plan and purpose.

Duration: 50:22

Scripture: Habakkuk 1:13, Habakkuk 2:4, Habakkuk 2:14, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Prophetic"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages the audience to broaden their perspective beyond their own country and see what God is doing globally. He shares a personal testimony of taking church members to Israel and how it opened their eyes to a bigger view of God's work. The speaker also discusses the story of Habakkuk, who complained to God about injustice and violence but persisted in prayer. The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the context of biblical texts and encourages the audience to delve into the book of Habakkuk for a deeper understanding of its message.

Transcript

Body clock is three o'clock in the morning and I don't often preach at that time. Anyway, here we are. I'm going into the Old Testament tonight and tomorrow night quite deliberately because I'm coming across many Christians who don't read the Old Testament, and that's three-quarters of your Bible wasted.

The idea is that if we're Christian we're going to read Christian scriptures and they're all in the New Testament, and these are Jewish scriptures. Why should Christians bother? It's worse than that. Centuries ago there was a man called Marcion and he started a heresy called Marcionism.

His idea was that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are two different gods. He said the Old Testament God is harsh and cruel and the New Testament God is kind and loving. He preached a Christianity that abolished the Old Testament.

Sadly, I have to say that in our generation there is a revival of Marcionism. Even evangelicals are saying the Old Testament we don't need, we can do away with. The New Testament is the Bible for Christians.

But I want to say very clearly and strongly the God of Israel is the Father of Jesus. They are the same God. Even Paul said the Old Testament was written for the good of Christians, that we might learn from

their example, that we might realise that the God we are worshipping is the same God and he will deal with us in the same way he dealt with the Jewish people.

And that is why we read the Old Testament. I love the Old Testament. Years ago I dedicated my life to getting people excited about every book in the Bible and not just their favourite book.

If you ask me what is my favourite book in the Bible, it is the last one I have read. It is the last one I have studied and that becomes my favourite for a few weeks until I get into another book. So tonight we are into one of the smallest books of the Old Testament which many people ignore, except for a few quotable quotes.

There are verses in this little prophet that many preachers quote, but there are not so many who know the whole book and the story behind the book. I teach people to read the Bible a book at a time because it is not a book, it is a library of sixty-six very different books. Only when you begin to look at the book as a whole will you understand everything in that book.

When you ask the crucial question, why was this book written? When you get the answer to that question you have got the key that will unlock the whole book and its riches for you and make Bible study an exciting voyage of discovery. Now many years ago there was a rather unusual, extraordinary series of situation comedy on your television centred on a mobile army hospital in Korea. What a subject for comedy! It was called Mash, I think, and one of the favourite characters in that was called Clinger.

It was a lovely nickname for someone. The Hebrew for Clinger is Habakkuk. So now you know what his name means.

He was a man who was a Clinger and normally human Clingers are not very popular. They cling to you. You know who I mean and what I mean.

But it's when people cling to God that something begins to happen. Habakkuk was a Clinger with God and he held on to God, he argued with God. He never wanted to be a prophet.

He didn't intend to be a prophet. He didn't want to be a preacher. He didn't want to talk to anybody else, but he did talk to God and he took his complaints to God and he argued with God.

Now don't ever try that because you won't win the argument, and he didn't. But that was how he got to a message which we're going to see tonight and tomorrow night is one of the most relevant parts of the whole Bible for the situation in which we in Western society are today. So I'll begin by reading some of it to you.

I love to read the Bible to people. I prefer it to preaching, and that's because every word is worth hearing when I'm reading the Bible. You get the message? All right, let's turn to the book of Habakkuk.

You might just need to look at the index to find it, but I'm going to read all of chapter one and a wee bit of chapter two. I want you to imagine Clinger arguing with God. The oracle that Habakkuk, the prophet, received.

The next part is headed Habakkuk's complaint. How long, O Lord, must I call for help but you do not listen? Or cry out to you violence but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me, there's strife and conflict abounds. Therefore

the law is paralysed and justice never prevails.

The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted. Now comes the answer of the Lord. 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.

I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people that are law to themselves and promote their own honour. Their 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. They all come bent on violence.

Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand. They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified camps and cities.

They build earthen ramps and capture them. Then they sweep past like the wind and go on, guilty men whose own strength is their God. Habakkuk says, O Lord, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die.

O Lord, you have appointed them to execute judgement. O Rock, you have ordained them to punish. Your 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? You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler. The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks.

He catches them in his net. He gathers them up in his dragnet, and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to the dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.

Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy? I will stand at my watch, says Habakkuk, 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. That's a dramatic conversation.

Before we look at it, let me quote some of the quotable quotes from Habakkuk. In chapter 1, your eyes are too pure than to look on evil. But that's not God speaking, that's Habakkuk speaking.

It's an argument that Habakkuk is using, and actually it's not an argument that's true. But I've heard that quoted in prayers and sermons as if that's a profound truth. But it isn't.

Then from chapter 2, the just shall live by faith. That was the cry of the Reformation a few hundred years ago. It was Martin Luther's watchword, the just shall live by faith.

But he'd got the wrong meaning. Let's move on. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

That's been turned into hymns and songs. But people have missed the meaning. Turn the page.

In wrath remember mercy. Oh, I've heard that quoted in prayer meetings. And then finally, though the fig tree does not blossom and there are no grapes on the vine, yet I will rejoice in God my Saviour.

Have you heard that quoted? Of course you have. And yet when you take those texts out of context, they lose their meaning. We need to go back to the whole book.

Over these two evenings I hope to cover the whole book for you, and I hope you'll get as excited as I am by its message. Well now, Habakkuk is bewildered. His first complaint is that God is doing too little about the situation, and his second complaint, when we come to it, we'll see he's complaining that God is intending to do too much.

So here's Habakkuk telling God he's either doing too little or too much. But don't laugh at him because you've probably done the same thing. And I have.

God, you should be handling this situation. You should be doing something. Look what they're doing and you're doing nothing.

Oh God, that's too much, just steady on a bit. It's so human. But at least he's clinging to God.

He's taking his grumbles and complaints to God and that's the best place to take them. If you take them to other people they may sympathise or argue but they won't tell you the truth, perhaps. If you've got a complaint, go to God with it.

I will tell you a true story. I know the lady. She lives in Africa.

She was in a car crash and had terrible injuries, and for the rest of her life she was in constant pain and she suffered so much. One night she was so fed up with God that she said, God, why do you leave me in all this pain? She grumbled and then she finally cursed God. As she did so, in her bedroom she tripped over a piece of rug on the floor and landed on the bed unconscious.

The next thing she knew there was a very bright light shining on her face. She thought she was in heaven and facing God and she thought, the last thing I did on earth was to curse God. But then she realised she'd been unconscious for the night and it was the morning sun coming in at the window on her face.

She began to apologise to God for what she'd said and thanked him that she was still alive after cursing him. Then she got out of bed and walked for the first time in years without any pain and she was totally healed by God. She cursed God and finished up healed.

I'm not advocating that, and I'm not writing in a book how to be healed, just curse God first. But she was honest with God and she complained to him, and that's the best thing you can do. Of course, this is what Habakkuk was doing, but what was he complaining about? He was complaining about the state of the people of God and of the city of God, Jerusalem.

For the people of God had got into idolatry and immorality and the King of Israel was leading his people down the hill into wrong living. He had built a bigger palace for himself and he'd reduced the cost of welfare services to get the money to build his palace. The gap between the rich and the poor was getting bigger and bigger, and justice was not prevailing.

The law was brought into disrepute and people were not getting justice, and above all, violence was filling the streets of Jerusalem so that people were not walking the streets at night. Even during the day, old

people didn't really like to go out in public. Does this strike any chords with you? This was a condition of God's city and God's people in it.

They had had many lapses in both belief and behaviour, but this was one of the worst, led by the King and this was God's people. God apparently was doing nothing about it. It was just going on and on.

Habakkuk had been complaining to God for up to twenty years about the situation. That's an awful long time to be praying a complaint to God, but he persisted. He said, God, why are you making me look at injustice and violence? You're doing nothing about it.

I'm praying about it but it's not getting anywhere. Why? And that little word keeps coming into Habakkuk's prayer - why God, why, why? And I'm always comforted by the fact that Jesus himself on the cross said, why God? Why have you left me? And why is a very common word to use when you talk about God - why God? Behind it there is impudence, that we think we know better than God, that we know what he should be doing. And it's as if we're saying, God, if I was running the world I'd do a better job than you're doing, which is an incredible thing to imply.

But we do it and people do it to me. So often I get asked, why did God allow this? Why did God take my partner? Why did he allow cancer? Why did he do this? Why, why, why? And they're saying, I don't understand God. I could do it better than God if only I was in charge.

That's an incredibly impudent thing for any human being to say, but we say it. Somebody once told me, if you ever grumble about the weather, David, you're criticising the way God runs the universe. I found that a bit of a challenge because the British people are always complaining about the weather.

We do it the whole time. We begin every conversation with, nice day, but it'll be worse tomorrow, and we get quite pessimistic about the weather. But every time you grumble about the weather, this friend told me, you're criticising God and the way he's running things.

Well, I had to swallow that. So here he is, and the one thing he is really concerned about is violence and lack of justice in Jerusalem, called the City of Peace and the City of God, the city where God had put his name, and this is what was going on. And God was doing nothing, or that's what he thought.

But that's because he had tunnel vision. He only could see what was going on in his own city, and we're so often like that. What happens to us locally where we live, we think the whole world's like that.

And so we concentrate on our tunnel vision on our own city or our own nation, and we don't know what's happening elsewhere, and sometimes alas, we don't care. But poor Habakkuk clung to God and made his complaint. And when you do that, God will answer.

I'm an advocate of what I call interrogatory prayer. Do you know what I mean? You've heard a whole lot about intercessory prayer, that's one thing, and it's an important thing. But interrogatory prayer, I hope you get near enough to God to use that.

I mean by that asking God questions and waiting for an answer, and that opens up a two-way conversation. But don't ever think you'll win an argument with God, and don't ever think you won't get a shock or a surprise in return when he answers. You see, I draw a distinction between what some people call answered prayer, which is a prayer that gets a result.

I call answered prayer a prayer that gets a response. In other words, I say to the Lord, Lord, I'd love a big Cadillac to drive in. And the Lord said, no David, I'm not going to give it to you.

That's an answered prayer. Have you got the message now? You see what I mean. An answered prayer is one that gets an answer, not necessarily the result you want, but an answer.

And an answer from God is a wonderful thing. Well now, what was God's answer? Open your eyes Habakkuk, look at the nations. If you just look at your own nation, you're not going to see the answer.

Look at the whole world, look at history, get the big view, get out of this tunnel vision that only looks at America or only looks at Britain. Look at what's going on elsewhere and see what is happening and discern what I'm doing. Do you know, it's very exciting when you discover that history is his story, and you read your daily newspaper with new eyes to get a bigger view of what God is doing.

I learned this lesson simply. I'm going to share this testimony with you. Years ago, I took a group of church members to Israel on a tour.

I used to take them out fifty by fifty, and they said they learned more from me in two weeks in Israel than six months of me in the pulpit. I think that's true. But I took them out and then they went home.

I had a few more days in Israel on my own before another group of fifty church members came out and joined me, and I would show them round. My wife went back with the first group, and the last thing she said to me before getting on the plane in Israel was, David, did you ask for a postal vote? I said, no, I forgot to. She said, well, it's a general election while you're still here with the next group and you won't be able to vote.

I said, oh well, I'll stay here and pray. That night was the annual celebration of independence of Israel, and I was out on the street dancing with young people till four in the morning. It was exciting.

There were babies just lying under shrubs on the sidewalk and perfectly safe to be in a safe situation. Like that was wonderful. I went back to the hotel and I said, Lord, I can't vote in the election but would you mind if I asked you, who are you voting for? Because I believe God has the casting vote in every election and he can either vote in justice and give you the leader you don't want but need, or he can vote in mercy and give you the one he chooses for your good.

He's got the casting vote. He told me, I'm voting for Margaret Thatcher. I said, Margaret Thatcher? All right, Lord, but is there anything you want me to tell her? That was a silly question to ask because he answered.

He said, I want you to tell her to get back to the faith her father had. He was a Methodist preacher. I want you to tell her to make friends with Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel, as soon as she can.

So I pulled out a sheet of hotel notepaper and, Dear Mrs Thatcher, I want to be the first in the country to congratulate you on becoming Prime Minister because God is going to vote for you. There are two things he wants you to know. He wants you to get back to the faith that your father had and he wants you to make a friend of Menachem Begin of Israel as soon as you get into power.

Then I thought, I can't send this letter. I thought, she'll think I'm a crazy. The next morning some friends from Jerusalem picked me up in Tel Aviv to take me to their home in Jerusalem where I would stay for the

few days until the next group joined me.

And I said, could you please take me to the post office first? Because I had gone walking in the streets of Tel Aviv in the dark after I'd gone back to the hotel and written the letter, and I looked into a bookshop window and in the middle of the window was a text from Isaiah framed and it said, For Jerusalem's sake I will not keep silent. For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace. And I said, All right Lord, I'll send the letter.

So the next morning when my friends picked me up I said, We need to go to the post office first. I've got an important letter to post. We went to the post office and I pushed the letter through and the girl behind the counter, I said, I don't care how much it costs, how many shekels, just put as many stamps as it needs to get there tomorrow.

And she stuck them all on. And my friend said, What's in that letter? I said, Well, I'm just telling Mrs Thatcher she's going to be Prime Minister. And my friend said, Well, you'll be in our house when the election happens and if she's not elected we'll kick you out of our house.

And I said, Why? And they said, We don't entertain false prophets. Anyway, she got in and I didn't know, but one of the first letters she wrote was to write back to that letter. And when she was interviewed by the press outside 10 Downing Street they said, What are you going to do as Prime Minister? The first thing she said was, I'm going to try and recover the faith my father had.

Now I knew nothing about this and I'm out in Israel taking other church members around. Time comes to go home and in those days you had to leave your tickets with the authorities and they gave them back to you when you left. And they gave all my group of church members a ticket for British Airways and they gave me a ticket for LL.

That's the Israeli airline and it means Every Landing Always Late, but LL. And I said, Look, you can't separate me from the group. I'm their leader and I'm responsible for getting them home.

They said, The tickets are fixed. So I walked towards an LL jumbo jet and climbed aboard that with a little Jewish man called Menachem Begin. I said, Where are you going? He said, I'm going to London to try and meet Margaret Thatcher.

I said, It's all fixed up. That experience taught me that God is in charge of the nations and history is his story. And I began to get a much bigger picture of God - the God who settles elections, the God who moves nations around, the God who brings the proud low and raises the humble high.

And that's what Habakkuk was to find. Habakkuk, look what I'm doing with the nations. Get a bigger view of me.

And then God dropped the bomb. He said, I'm raising up the Babylonians. Now that must have been such a shock.

God, you're doing nothing about the bad state of your people and your city full of violence and injustice. And God said, Yes, I am doing something about it. I'm raising up the Babylonians.

Now that must have been a terrible shock for Habakkuk because the Babylonians were noted for their aggressive invasion of countries, their cruelty. One of the things that the Babylonians did when they invaded another country was to destroy every vestige of life - not just all the people, but all the crops, all

the animals, even all the trees. They would leave no trace of life after they'd invaded.

And that comes out in the third chapter, as we shall see tomorrow night. It's against that background that the prophet Habakkuk had to speak. God was under no illusions about the Babylonians.

God himself then went on to describe their barbaric cruelty, their lack of any sympathy or sensitivity to those they conquered, and he gave a list of the bad things. Then God himself said, they're like a fisherman with a dragnet - not a fisherman with a rod and line, but a fisherman with a dragnet who drags fish up from the sea wholesale. God said, I'm raising them up.

And now that really throws Habakkuk onto the other foot of his argument. God, that's too much! He's already complained that God is doing too little, but now he says, no God, you couldn't do that. That's just too much.

I was just asking you to come and put things right here. I wasn't asking you to do that. That's crazy.

That's when he argued, you are too pure to stand by and let that happen. You wouldn't do such a thing. It's a clever argument, but it wasn't true.

God would do such a thing. Habakkuk is complaining now, but none of us would survive. You'll have no people left, never mind a city.

That's just too strong a cure. That's, well, using a sledgehammer to do what? I can't think of it. I'll leave you to think of something.

But it's just too much altogether. And you're asking me to stand by and see that happen. I couldn't do it, Lord.

You know how they behave. You know what they're going to do. And you'd actually raise them up, that you're making them a stronger nation.

And you're doing it simply to come and put things right in Jerusalem. The application of all this I will come to now. God is raising up Islam to deal with his church in the West.

That's my message for tonight. You've heard my bickle commend this book, *The Challenge of Islam to Christians*. I wrote it five or six years ago, and in it I predicted that Islam will take over Britain.

That was a shock to many British people. But I said, listen, that's the mercy of God, not his judgement. He is raising up Islam, and our reaction to that is, but Islam? Neither their belief nor their behaviour is what you want.

And you can use them to deal with us. No, Lord, that's doing too much. That's wrong.

You're too pure to do that. You can guess Habakkuk's argument there, can't you? But I believe that Britain and following America will be in a Habakkuk situation. Listen, God is doing it for our sakes.

He is raising them up, that's what I believe. They are the fastest growing religion in the world now, and in size they are second only to Christianity. But they are making incredible headway.

I wrote the book five years ago. There are now writers writing books about Islam in a totally different spirit, as something that is now present. They are infiltrating every aspect of our national life.

They even have a Muslim Parliament of Great Britain. They are setting up not ghettos but communities of Muslims, gathering them together in big cities and imposing Sharia law on that part of England. It's happening before our very eyes.

When I first said it, it was a shock to Britain. I became newspaper headlines, and one newspaper - I'll never forget - the front page had the top headline, Pawson Predicts Islam Takeover, or words to that effect. At the bottom of the page they had interviewed a leading Muslim citizen in the city of Leicester in England who has been decorated by our Queen and who is a judge in the law courts.

He was asked, what do you think about Pawson's prediction? Oh, he says, it won't happen for quite a few years. And he said, maybe in ten or twenty years. In other words, you've nothing to worry about now.

But my children and grandchildren will have to worry. In between the article about my prediction and his Muslim response was a colour picture of Her Majesty the Queen taking her shoes off to enter a mosque. That was the front page of the paper.

But now alas, Prince Charles is advocating Islam. Our former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, said that he believed Islam had the answer to our economic problem, and we are just seeing it happen. But when you see that God has raised it up, it's his last desperate measure to purify the Church and to bring the Church in the West back to what it ought to be, because there's nothing like persecution to purify the Church.

Wherever the Church is suffering today, and it's suffering in many countries, you find there a Church that is being purified, a Church that is cutting out Sunday Christians by the hundreds, but a Church that is becoming strong in Christ. Because persecution never killed the Church, it does the opposite. The devil knows that.

He can only destroy a Church from the inside. He can't destroy it from the outside. He tries, he raises up people to bring against the Church, but it's only when he gets into a Church and corrupts people inside the Church and uses them to divide the Church and uses them to mislead the Church, that's when things go wrong.

If you think the Church is in a pretty good state in the Western world, I can only speak for my country. I can't speak for yours, you must speak for yours. But the Church in my country is dying.

The state church is losing a thousand people a week. The Methodist church is closing two churches a week, while there are two mosques a week being opened. But one of the biggest things - and I say this advisedly - next week on one of the evenings I am going to speak about divorce and remarriage.

This is now right inside the Church and even as much inside as it is in society, and it goes right against Jesus' wishes. It is one of the key areas where the Church in the West needs to repent of its tolerance. I throw that out as a kind of preparation for one of my subjects next week.

But people say, well, what has the Church got to repent of? There's one of the top things - that we are accepting the breakup of Christian marriages without telling them what Jesus said about it. So there are things to repent of, and that's one of the top things, I believe, in God's sight that we need to repent of. So there it is.

Habakkuk couldn't handle the fact that God was going to use Babylonians to cure the problems of violence, of immorality, of idolatry in Jerusalem, the very city of God. And he argued with God. And finally

we find that he climbed up onto the ramparts of Jerusalem and said, I'm just going to sit here and see whether God does what he says.

God had to rebuke him of that. What are you doing up here, Habakkuk? You get down and tell the people what I'm doing. You should be telling others and warning them, not sitting here to see if I'll keep my word.

What are you doing up in the ramparts, sitting there? You know, many prophets in the Old Testament did that. Jonah was one when God let off the city of Nineveh, and Jonah went and sat outside the city and grumbled and said, all right, let's see you do it, Lord. He was not accepting what God's answer to his prayer was.

Now that's roughly where the prophecy of Habakkuk begins. It's not a very edifying story, but it's very real. It's a man who is burdened by the injustice and the violence in the city of God by a people called to be a holy people who have got right away from God's standards of living.

It's a man who is genuinely burdened for other people and for God's people and for the fact that God's reputation is being dragged down by the behaviour of God's people. But he's clinging to God and he's arguing with God and he's criticising God. That's too little, that's too much.

God, I want you to answer my prayer in just my way. I want you to do it with the best solution that I think is the best solution. How often we tell God the solution to our problems and ask him to do what we want him to do.

But it's honest. Do you use interrogatory prayer? Do you ask God questions? I was having a huge debate in a university in Birmingham - you would call it Birmingham - in the university to all the students and it was a debate on the motion that Jesus is the only way to God. They asked me to propose that motion.

I was opposed by a clergyman with a dog collar on and a woman who was seconder against the motion wearing a big wooden cross on her necklace around her neck. They were opposing the motion that Jesus is the only way to God. Can you imagine a more ludicrous situation? But in the debate there was a communist, an older man, who stood up and he really went for me with big guns.

He said, you Christians! He said, you sit in the lifeboat on your way to heaven being saved and you look at people like us drowning in the sea and you despise us. That's how he began. Then he began to attack me as a Christian and he was getting very, very angry.

I was writing down notes on the back of an envelope, I can give as good as I get, and I was getting some real hot answers for this communist. Then I just stopped and I said, Lord, how do you feel about this man? I wished I hadn't asked, because I burst into tears and I wept in a public debate in front of all the students of the university. Then, bless the Lord, he gave me a vision, a rather silly little vision.

All I could do was just tell the people what I could see and it completely changed the situation. Then they took a vote on it. The chairman who was chairing the debate said, I announce the result, eighty percent against the motion that Jesus is the only way to God.

The whole audience cried out, wrong, wrong, it was eighty percent for the motion. He said, I'm so sorry, I've made a terrible mistake. He said, I never expected this motion to be carried.

So he denounced that it was lost. But then he had to correct himself and say it's carried. Well, the clergyman who opposed me walked off in absolute anger.

Then I was busy counselling students for a long time afterwards. It's the best evangelistic meeting I've ever been in. The first student came forward and he said, my, wasn't the Lord with this tonight? I said, oh, you're a Christian.

Well, he said, I wasn't when I came. But I was so glad that I asked the Lord, how do you feel? Otherwise, I'd have given that communist an earful and we'd have lost that debate. But just asking God, how do you feel, and getting an answer, and weeping over that poor communist man and realising that the Lord was grieved by him made all the difference.

Ask God questions. He can take it. He'd rather you cursed him, in a sense, than made polite prayers and said what you think you ought to say to God.

He wants you to be straight with him because he wants to be straight with you, and he will be. And dear Klinger, Habakkuk, sorry, dear Habakkuk got his answer, but he didn't accept it. And he still said, I'm just going to wait and see if that really is the answer, because I don't believe it is.

So we leave Habakkuk up on his rampart watching instead of talking. God was going to say to him, get down there in the street and write this up on the wall, the Babylonians are coming. You ought to be down there telling them what I've told you, not questioning me again, not waiting to see if I meant it.

You should get down there. And he said, write it up in big letters so that anybody running down the street can read it. That's one possible meaning of the next bit.

Or write it in such large letters that everybody will see it. Put it up on a wall, the Babylonians are coming, and let's see how the people respond to that. Because right until the last minute God is always wanting people to repent, and when people repent he will repent.

Amazing to think that the Bible says God repents, but it means he does change his mind. The amazing thing is that prayer, human prayer, can change God's mind, not for his eternal purpose but for his immediate action. Our prayer can actually do that.

Did you realise that? People say, what's the point of praying? God's almighty, he's in charge, he knows what he's doing. Prayer is simply to align ourselves with his will. Well, it is partly that.

But you can challenge your God. He's made you to do so. He wants you to do so, but he will challenge you in return and his answer may not be the answer you wanted, but he will reply.

That's the blessing, that God wants to share his heart with you. You share your heart with him, he'll share his with you. That's the promise of Habakkuk.

I'm going to leave it right there, and we'll see you tomorrow night, and we'll look at what he said then. If you'd like to learn more about the House of Prayer in Kansas City, for additional teachings, resources, and podcasts, as well as information on who we are and our upcoming events, please visit our website, ihop.org.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22730.mp3>
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