

Burdens Into a Song

by Walter Beuttler

The secret to turning our burdens into a song is faith in the integrity of Almighty God in spite of what He does or does not do.

Scripture: Habakkuk 1:1-2, Habakkuk 2:1, Habakkuk 2:4, Habakkuk 3:17

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Worship And Praise"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the transformation of burdens into songs as seen in the book of Habakkuk. The prophet starts burdened and questioning, but through seeking God's answers and having faith in His character, he ends up singing praises despite unchanged circumstances. Habakkuk's journey teaches us to trust in God's integrity and find joy in who He is, not just in what He does or allows.

Transcript

Habakkuk is the only book in the Bible that begins with a burden and ends with a song. In between these two extremes, we have God's way of turning our burdens into a song.

"The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see... To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."
Habakkuk 1:1, 3:19

In the beginning, the prophet is burdened and bowed down. His spirit is heavy, his heart is troubled, his mind is questioning. At the end of the book, he asks no more questions, as he is singing. God gave him, and also, will give to us His secret of turning our burdens into a song.

The prophet is perplexed because of what seems to him to be the strange doings of divine providence. He does not understand God, nor can He reconcile what he knows about God, or thinks that he knows, with what God is doing, so he is going through a time of perplexity.

He has three questions:

(1). "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear!" Habakkuk 1:2

This relates to the problem of unanswered prayer, or at least the problem of greatly delayed answers to prayer. Today, there are many who can relate to this - "How long shall I cry, Lord?" How long must I pray for my daughter who is on drugs?

I have never known an era when so many of the Lord's people are having so much trouble with one or more of their children. I am sure that some of you could say, "Amen." Is it that in these days Satan has particularly selected the ministry, and the Lord's people, for special attention? In a sense, that would be a compliment, as it is quite a problem.

How long Lord, "is the burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw?" He had a question - the problem of unanswered prayer.

In verse 3 he raises another question:

2). "Why does the Lord show me iniquity?"

Here is the problem of persistent evil in the world, without any intervention by God. He again has a question - WHY? Many of the Lord's people have a why in their heart. Why did You take that little child for which we prayed for so long? Why did my boy not come back from Vietnam or Korea? Why did You permit such and such? God, why do You permit circumstances, happenings that appear to be the very negation of Your promises?

The Lord's people go through situations, which on the surface seem to negate God's promises and God's character. Why, Lord? Why do You let the world get worse and worse? and no one of us doubts that this is so.

A lady said to me, "Brother Beuttler, why does God let the devil live?" The answer is simple, "Because He needs him for you." She did not ask another question.

The Lord uses all kinds of instrumentalities. In fact, God wants to teach us to not ask some questions. The "secret things" belong to the Lord our God; those things, which are revealed, belong unto us. There are areas of truth, and the working of divine providence, which God is keeping from our knowledge. Why?

I go to Australia fairly frequently, and I always stop with very rare exceptions, at the Commonwealth Bible College in Brisbane. I will be there again, this summer. Last year, I was there teaching both morning and evening sessions. In the evening we went down to the Center City Assembly of God.

I am only saying that this is where I was. I go everywhere, Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans. In France, next summer, I will be with the Catholics. God is not a denominationalist. One body, one faith, one God, and Father of us all. Why are we building fences? The Lord is busy tearing them down and I am helping Him.

We went down to Center City, night after night. Students who could find transportation went down too. One fellow went on his motorcycle. We came back and went to bed. Late that night, well after midnight, I heard a rumpus. I got up, peeked out, and here was the Australian police. I asked, "Is anything wrong?"

They said, "Yes, one of the students got killed on the way back to school. He turned a corner on his motorcycle and hit another car and was thrown over and died." The next morning when I came to chapel, the motorcycle was by the door of the chapel. They should have never have put it there. It was all bent to pieces. They should have put it away. I do not know who was that foolish. The girls sat on one side, sobbing, crying. Some of the fellows were crying. There was a gloom over that whole chapel.

The president walked up to me at my table on the platform and said to me, "Brother Beuttler, the students are terribly upset. It is up to you to straighten them out. They are asking - why?"

This boy went down to Center City to hear Brother Beuttler speak, and it cost him his life. You can imagine how I felt. I felt awful, but I gave a study on Habakkuk. I took an hour with it. After the hour we had wondrous worship. Tears were wiped away, and we went through the week as though nothing had happened. But, people ask, why?

Down at NBI a family went home for a weekend, father, mother and their two girls, playmates of our two girls. They got hit by a car. Their car careened into a gas station. It was set on fire. Nobody could get to it, and the family was burned up. Why?

I was the senior teacher. I was asked to have the funeral service, two of them, one in our chapel. Here at an angle was the father's coffin, over here the mother, in front two little white coffins. What an assignment! A teacher met me on the way to chapel and said, "Brother Beuttler, I am glad it's you and not me. I do not know what I could say. The people are asking why."

As I said, there are many with a "why" in their lives. I carried a why in my heart for many years, until God saw that I would never get over it, and He gave me the answer. Habakkuk asked why.

Then, in verse 13, he had a third question:

3) "Wherefore look You upon them that deal treacherously?"

The problem that has to do with the suffering of the righteous at the hands of the wicked. Lord, why do You permit the righteous people to suffer? The ungodly flourish like a bay tree, but Your own righteous people suffer at the hands of the wicked.

We had a pastor in Philadelphia during the last war, when we had rationing in which oil and gasoline were rationed. He went to the rations board to ask for 500 gallons of fuel oil for his home. They gave him 250. He said, "I'm sorry, but I asked for 500, as this is how many that I will need."

They said, "Look here, Reverend, we assume that every man is a liar and so we cut their requests in half, and if you are a man who is telling the truth, that is too bad for you. You get 50% of what you ask, like everybody else."

There was an honest man, suffering at the hands of the wicked. He could not heat his home with 250 gallons of oil. "If you're telling the truth, that is your fault. You get what everybody else gets." This is what troubled this man.

Now then, what did this prophet do with his questions? I am generalizing now, and this is dangerous, because there are many exceptions. My personal observation for some time has been that the Lord's people are praying less and less in trying to solve their problems. Instead, they run to people. I know what students do. They come to the teacher's door, and say, "I have a problem."

However, the answer they received did not suit them, so they go to the next teacher's door, and continue, until they find somebody that agrees with them. Many times they do not want an answer to their question. Instead, they want to find somebody that agrees with them, so they can quote them. Also, they feed on sympathy, and also, on receiving personal attention.

Many fail to seek the secret of first going to God. They prefer to ring doorbells, so to speak. I get many phone calls that relate to this. One lady called me and said, "Brother Beuttler, would you please go to God and find out whether it is all right for me to shave the hair off my legs." Can you imagine me taking time with that?

Now, what did the prophet do?

"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Habakkuk 2:1

This prophet decided that he was to set himself on a tower before the Lord, and then wait for Him to give an answer to his problem. I am a strong believer in going to God with our problems, and staying there. I have often wondered when I read the Bible, where all these towers came from. Jesus spoke about a man building a tower.

One day, I was invited to visit the American consulate in Damascus. I came up from Jerusalem, and went to Damascus. Our consulate official took me around for a day, and also, out into the countryside. There for the first time, I had the answer to my question. What were these towers in the Bible? We were outside Damascus, and from any given position, you could see several of these towers. I took a good look. I would judge they were 6 by 6 feet, 16 to 18 feet high, a room at the top with wooden pegs coming out from the wall so a man could go up there to watch their fields, to rest at noon, or sleep overnight. I think that is the kind of a tower referred to here in Habakkuk.

The prophet has decided that he is going to go up there, to sit before God and wait before Him, until He gives him an answer. I have studies that I give on "Waiting for God," on how to wait for God for a specific objective. Apparently this man had the secret.

Every year, I go overseas for ministry. Often, I set aside a whole week somewhere in a hotel to fast and pray, and wait on God. Last year, it was in New Zealand. Nobody in the world knows where I am. I shut myself up with God, and I present myself before the Lord. Sometimes this includes my receiving from the Lord a solution to specific problems. It is a wonderful thing to go before God. This man did, and in verse 2, it says, "And the Lord answered me, and said...."

In verse 4, it says, "The just shall live by His faith." Now, let us recapitulate a bit. The man had a burden. He was bowed down and troubled by three questions representing three problems:

- 1) How long? The problem of unanswered prayer.
- 2) Why? The problem of the Lord's failure to interfere in the ways of the wicked.
- 3) Wherefore? Represents the problem of the suffering of the righteous at the hands of the ungodly.

The Lord did not answer Habakkuk's questions. He bypasses his questions, and gave answers to his need. The Lord did not give him an explanation of the working of His providence. Instead, He asked Habakkuk to have confidence in the integrity of Almighty God. "The just shall live by faith," and I am following the Hebrew now, "in the faithfulness of God."

God is not answering his why, his how long, his wherefore. Rather, He is saying in effect, "Habakkuk, you do not need the answers to your questions. Those answers will not solve the problem, for the solution of

your problem does not lie in an explanation of it, but in faith in the integrity of God."

A faith that will say, perhaps like Job of old, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him," or the statement of another, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

You see, God seeks to raise our belief in God to a higher level of faith in God; not because of what He does, but because of who He is. Some people believe in God because of what He does, but God wants to elevate our faith unto a higher level where we can believe in God in spite of what He does, or does not do. Can you see the difference? This is the upper level of faith that God sought and did impart to this prophet.

A little child, who was prayed for, for years, dies after 4 weeks. Now this kind of faith does not question and say, "Lord, why did You allow this to happen? Rather, this faith says, "Lord, You do all things well. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Lord, I have prayed for healing for so long, but I am not going to question Your promises, Though He slay me, yet will I trust him." This is a rare faith.

Habakkuk received an answer, but we will need to go toward the end to hear it. Notice the last chapter, verse 17. The prophet is not depressed, he is not perplexed; he is no longer burdened, as he has no more questions. Now comes a remarkable utterance.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." Habakkuk 3:17-19

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom." In other words, even though the bank account is down to zero. Even though everything goes wrong, even though there is a drought and the produce of the land has died, even though the house burns down, YET, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

What God is doing here is to get this man to derive his joy, not from what God does, but from who God is. Because no matter what God permits, or does not permit, He is still the same God. And God seeks to lift the basis of our joy, the source of our joy away from what He does (even His blessings), to who He is, "I will rejoice in the God of my salvation."

The other week, one church gave my wife a gift, a check for \$1,750 to go with me this summer in ministry around the world. Well, that girl was happy, believe you me, and so was I. Yet God wants to lift up our joy at the source, into Himself. Do you know what she said to me? A few days later she said, "Daddy, I do not care whether I go or not. All I want is to be in the center of the will of God, whether it is Australia, or right here in Pennsylvania." Her joy was in the Lord, and that check, while awfully nice, really does not mean that much, because there are higher values - the character of God Himself.

"The Lord God is my strength." Now, He is deriving his faith from God Himself. This is the strength of faith, and the other is the joy of faith. "He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon Thy high places." This is now the walk of faith, not on the basis of what God does, but on the basis of what God is.

In the Himalayans, there are mountain goats. Goats with long hind legs, very well equipped to make them sure-footed in the mountains. The mountain lion likes to have breakfast, dinner and supper on mountain goat. He goes after those goats, but the goats run uphill where the lion is at a disadvantage. The goats

have the advantage of long hind legs. These goats can jump over crevices that the lion cannot get across. By faith in the integrity of God in spite of what He does or does not do, either permits, or does not permit, we are able to escape the lion of our soul, and run uphill and over cliffs where other animals would perish, by keeping faith in the integrity of God, in spite of everything else.

"To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." Now the prophet is singing. His circumstances are not changed, but he is changed. You see, God goes after us.

I was a pastor for a number of years, and had a lady who was the trial of my life. I was a young preacher. On Sunday morning, I would find a note, "Brother Beuttler, let's sing song so and so. Do not forget to do this, and I suggest you have a special and" Every Sunday I had my instructions, and it got under my skin, it got my goat. Why didn't the Lord appoint her to be pastor?

One Sunday morning I went back upstairs and knelt down. I said, "Father, will You please get this sister out of this church and send her somewhere else. She is getting my goat." And the Lord spoke, "If you did not have a goat, she could not get it." I never forgot that.

To bring things together, here are the extremes: the burden, then, the song. But in the middle of it, the Lord shares with this great man His secret, which automatically dissolves his questions without answering them, for his need did not lie in an answer to his questions. His need was a greater faith and confidence in an Almighty God, so he could believe in the justice, righteousness, and the immutability of his God, and put all his joy, peace, and all his faith in the character of God, in spite of what the Lord does, or does not do.

When he got the point, he experienced a transformation, so that at the end of this book, he could sing, but no circumstances had been changed. We have a prophet that was changed by the word of God, in the middle of his circumstances. Now he asks no more: How long? Why? Wherefore? Instead, he says in effect, "Nothing matters any more, but God."

The Lord changed a burdened prophet into a singing prophet. This is the Lord's secret of turning our burdens into a song. What secret? Faith in the integrity of Almighty God in spite of what He does or does not do.

Habakkuk says in effect, "Nothing at hand, and nothing in sight, yet I will praise the Lord."

Praise the Lord!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/walter-beuttler/burdens-into-a-song/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net