



# Habakkuk – When Faith Gets Real

## Wk. 1 “Dealing with the Hard Truth”

### By Pastor Jody May

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#### Habakkuk 1:1-17 ESV

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

#### Habakkuk's Complaint

2 O Lord, **how long** shall I cry for help,  
and you will not hear?

Or cry to you “Violence!”  
and you will not save?

3 **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.

4 So the law is paralyzed,  
and justice never goes forth.  
For the wicked surround the righteous;  
so justice goes forth perverted.

#### The Lord's Answer

5 “Look among the nations, and see;  
wonder and be astounded.

For I am doing a work in your days  
that you would not believe if told.

6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,  
that bitter and hasty nation,  
who march through the breadth of the earth,  
to seize dwellings not their own.

7 They are dreaded and fearsome;  
their justice and dignity go forth from  
themselves.

8 Their horses are swifter than leopards,  
more fierce than the evening wolves;  
their horsemen press proudly on.

Their horsemen come from afar;  
they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

9 They all come for violence,  
all their faces forward.  
They gather captives like sand.

10 At kings they scoff,  
and at rulers they laugh.

They laugh at every fortress,  
for they pile up earth and take it.

11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on,  
guilty men, whose own might is their god!”

#### Habakkuk's Second Complaint

12 Are you not from everlasting,  
O Lord my God, my Holy One?  
We shall not die.

O Lord, you have ordained them as a judgment,  
and you, O Rock, have established them  
for reproof.

13 You who are of purer eyes than to see evil  
and cannot look at wrong,

why do you idly look at traitors  
and remain silent when the wicked  
swallows up

the man more righteous than he?

14 You make mankind like the fish of the sea,  
like crawling things that have no ruler.

15 He brings all of them up with a hook;  
he drags them out with his net;

he gathers them in his dragnet;  
so he rejoices and is glad.

16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net  
and makes offerings to his dragnet;

for by them he lives in luxury,  
and his food is rich.

17 Is he then to keep on emptying his net  
and mercilessly killing nations forever?

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#### Opening Illustration:

Good morning everyone, what a crazy two weeks it has been. If you are joining us for the first time here welcome to HCC, from this point forward you can find us here helping make Disciples that Serve Jesus.



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For some of us this week **craziness manifested** in new ways as many of us found ourselves at home with our kids as we all became acquainted with home schooling. Along with that, many of us found out why we were not home school parents, props to all you guys that have been doing this, but the **blessing** of this we have had more **time with our families talking about Jesus**.

For others this week it meant that we had more free time because work came to a close. Heather, my wife, is a dental hygienist so she is at home now and so of course we have had to go through the **adjusting the budget**. Not only that my poor wife has **lost her weekly reprieve** from me and now she is trying to learn how to live with me seven days a week without killing me. So yes, we get this has been a challenge for many of us.

For others it has meant **not just social distancing but total quarantine**. Several in this body of HCC that people call home have had to shut themselves off basically from the outside world because they found themselves to be in that demographic that is under severe threat if they get sick from COVID-19.

**A lot of change has happened in a short time** and since that seems to be the theme, I am going to add one more thing. We are going to jump out of the book of Luke for 4-5 weeks at least and we are going to start a new sermon series in the book of **Habakkuk**. Some of you didn't even know that was a book in the Bible, it is, and it has a lot to say to us in a crazy time like this.

**Why Study This?** – From 1870 – 1914 things in the Western World were on the rise, it was a time of modernization and industrialization. Then all of the sudden WW1 breaks out, then there was the Great Depression, then WW2 and the Holocaust and then in the 40s much of Europe faced starvation in the winters due to a lack of food. People were thinking will it ever get better. Out of this time period Martin Lloyd Jones preaches on the book of Habakkuk to help his people deal with their crazy times in which they lived. If you want to read about that you can pick up the book *From Fear to Faith*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.amazon.com/Fear-Faith-Martyn-Lloyd-Jones-2011-04-15/dp/B01K0RLG28/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?crd=1JHST2S3H02QO&dchild=1&keywords=from+fear+](https://www.amazon.com/Fear-Faith-Martyn-Lloyd-Jones-2011-04-15/dp/B01K0RLG28/ref=sr_1_6?crd=1JHST2S3H02QO&dchild=1&keywords=from+fear+)



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While our times are nothing like those days, we are still challenged to live in such a way that shows that we **walk by Faith and not by sight** (2 Cor. 5:7). This morning we are going to start our own series in the book of Habakkuk called **“When Faith gets Real”**. I believe these days have been given to us so that we all can get a better grasp on how to live when your immediate tomorrow does not look any better than your today. God’s people are called to live by faith (2:4). **Do you believe what your eyes see, or do you believe and put stock in what God sees? Is this a time for desperation and fear or is it a time of opportunity and hope?**

**Introductions** are in order here, so who is Habakkuk?

- Hab is a prophet around 600 BC contemporary of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
- He has seen a lot of crazy things in his day (Fall of Nineveh Assyrian Cap. Cap 612, Battle of Hanan/death of Josiah 609, Battle of Carchemish – fall of Assyria 605)
- Being a prophet was a hard job, people respected you and Kings usually despised you, and for the good ones it got you killed.
- While not much is known about him he’s quoted 3 times in the NT; Romans 1:17, Gal. 3:11, and Acts 13.

Now let’s discuss the nature of Habakkuk’s 1<sup>st</sup> message, This **Hard Truth**, to the nation of Judah/Israel at their time of crisis. This morning we are going to split up this topic into 3 categories: Hab.’s complaint, the Lord’s response, and our response.

#### **1. Habakkuk’s Complaint: “You’ve got to be kidding me!?”**

How many of you our 80s movie fans? If you are, then you may remember the movie **Red Dawn**, the original, with all the 80s kid stars. It’s a fictional account of when the cold war turns into a very real WW3, when NATO is disbanded, Europe is taken over by the Communists, America is surrounded by hostile countries and

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an invasion actually comes to the shores of America. **The Wolverines** were a bunch of high school kids holding off the Russians from the North and the Cubans from the south. Crazy times definitely, and when you’re watching the movie thinking **what would I do if this crazy series of events ever unfolded?**

You see **for Hab, this was actually a real thing!** Judah, the last nation of God-fearers, is surrounded by hostile enemies. Egypt to the south that has reluctantly comes to agreeable terms with the Assyrian Empire in the North, because the nasty Chaldeans, Babylonians, are coming from the west to take everything over.

King Josiah thought to gain favor with the Babylonians and confronted Egypt when they began to make their play north, got him killed. Egypt gets mad and puts Jehoiakim on the throne, a puppet, and robs Judah blind! Now, broken and leaderless Judah is in the middle of the two bullies ready to fight with Judah being the prize for the victor.

On top of that everywhere that Hab looks, oh, don’t forget his occupation many times ended in a death sentence, he sees the supposedly people of God worshipping false gods, neglecting the poor and needy, and pretty much looking like the rest of the world, **they gave up on their faith when life got REAL!**

His attitude in vs. 1-4 I think is spot on, **“You have got to be kidding me!”** and a part of his oracle (burden) is to blurt out the obvious:

<sup>2</sup> O Lord, **how long** shall I cry for help,  
and you will not hear?  
Or cry to you “Violence!”  
and you will not save?  
<sup>3</sup> **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.  
<sup>4</sup> So the law is paralyzed,  
and justice never goes forth.  
For the wicked surround the righteous;  
so justice goes forth perverted.

Lord, I have not forgotten you, why have you forgotten us? There is Violence and you do nothing, there is sin and you allow it to go along, and I know you see it all! **Worst yet, I can’t get over it!** There is no end to this dilemma for me because I am stuck in it, nowhere to go because I am in the middle of it, there is no reprieve for everywhere I look people have abandon their senses! Their sense of morality,



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their religion, their national identity, and what’s worse I know it is going to bring judgment on our heads! **You have got to be kidding me!**

And Hab has two main questions which is where I think we can jump on with him here: **vs. 1 – How Long and vs. 3 Why?** Let me ask you a question how many of you in the past 2 weeks have asked God How Long or Why? Because I think this is exactly what we should be doing?

Hab is a Godly man, a righteous man, he knows Salvation comes from God and it is supposed to come through the Jews, God’s people to the world! His questioning God is appropriate, and it is how He should be feeling, and he has the freedom to do it because of Grace! He can’t stomach how the people are responding to their predicament and he is most likely developing an ulcer looking at it.

**Here’s what I think events like this are meant to do and perhaps you have encountered this lately:**

**1<sup>st</sup> – Makes you realize your great need for a Savior**

**2<sup>nd</sup> – It makes you call out to Him**

This morning perhaps COVID19 has caused you some distress, fear of getting sick, job loss, loss of income, loss of business, loss of social interaction, loss of progression in school, loss in your 401K, loss of sport scholarships, loss of joy in general. Then there are those of you that are angry, angry at how people panic, angry at how people don’t panic, angry how people are hoarding, angry how people spring break and don’t think about spreading a disease. But here’s the one thing I don’t want anyone to miss in all of this - **in your processing and asking HOW LONG and WHY has it made you see your great need for a Savior and is it making you call out to Him!?** If not, I want to say, **YOU’VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!**

**You have a God, He has the answers, but this is when your Faith is about to get Real – FAITH is believing there is a God to cry out to because you believe He can do things about your current status.** God’s people are not called to ignore their circumstances we are called to lift our voices, plead for those that need it. Hab



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did this and it was about to get even more real for him because God answers back.

### 2. The Lord’s Response: “*You wouldn’t believe me if I told you.*”

#### The Lord's Answer

<sup>5</sup> “Look among the nations, and see;  
wonder and be astounded.

For I am doing a work in your days  
that **you would not believe if told.**

<sup>6</sup> For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,  
that bitter and hasty nation,  
who march through the breadth of the earth,  
to seize dwellings not their own.

<sup>7</sup> They are dreaded and fearsome;  
their justice and dignity go forth from  
themselves.

<sup>8</sup> Their horses are swifter than leopards,

more fierce than the evening wolves;  
their horsemen press proudly on.

Their horsemen come from afar;  
they fly like an eagle swift to devour.

<sup>9</sup> They all come for violence,  
all their faces forward.

They gather captives like sand.

<sup>10</sup> At kings they scoff,  
and at rulers they laugh.

They laugh at every fortress,  
for they pile up earth and take it.

<sup>11</sup> Then they sweep by like the wind and go on,  
guilty men, whose own might is their god!”

Look Hab I am going to give you an answer **its’ just not the one you want to hear.** **Instead** of answering **how long** and **why** let me tell you who is coming and what they will do because you just wouldn’t get the why... Ok thanks Lord but that’s really not what I need to hear right now?

For all of us right now we want to know the outcome of our tomorrows and the reality is you and I are not able to see what God sees and we are not able to grasp or accept the limits of his plans. **Because sometimes God’s plans include pain and pain is the catalyst for change in your life and the lives of others.** No one wants to hear how their future is wrapped up through a path of suffering. **It just got real didn’t it?**

**Illustration of child-like pains:** You know when you take candy from your 3-year-old before dinner what is most likely to happen? In the midst of that **screaming** would you try and rationalize, would you explain the benefits of a balanced diet, would you validate what all dentists know? **No, you would look at them, see their discomfort and calmly tell them it’s for their own good and not only that you are eating broccoli now go wash up!**



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While they are still screaming you know it is irrational and it is all because they don't see the world like you do yet. **That is exactly where Hab was then and that is exactly where you and I are today!** Our 3-pound brain cannot grasp what God is about to do and if we did, we would want to change His mind (which you can't), and that is exactly why God allows the course of time to prove He is always in the right.

- Habakkuk had no clue that God would use the Babylonians to not only conquer the Jews but would use them to disperse them all over the middle east.
- He had no clue that He would use the Persians to entice the Greeks to come to the middle east and Hellenize and that means make one language where education, communication, and cross-cultural habitation could happen.
- He had no clue that God would raise up Rome, conquering the known world and instilling peace, building roads that lead all throughout the empire.
- He had no clue that because of the dispersion the Jews would install synagogues in Gentile communities exposing them to God worship.
- He had no clue that God would then send His Son, to incarnate, and start up a new religion, the “Way”/Christianity, that would end temple worship.
- He had no clue that the church would spread through the known world through these synagogues flooding the world with the gospel flooding the nations with the knowledge of the One True God.
- He had no clue that God would make a way when the Jews failed to do it, bringing Him more glory not the Jews, but Habakkuk wouldn't believe him nor could He grasp it... and His people still don't get it.

**Gospel Question:** Do you and I really think we would get what God was doing in our lives, would we really like it, would we accept it if it meant to give Him glory. Even if it meant you would lose your comfort and security?

Paul saw the truth and he testified to it:

#### **Acts 13:37-41 ESV**

**<sup>37</sup> but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. <sup>38</sup> Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to**



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you, <sup>39</sup> and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. <sup>40</sup> Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

<sup>41</sup> “Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.”

God’s reasoning for allowing trials and sufferings in your lives is still the same reasoning for the last 2,000 years. **It transforms His people into the image of His Son, and that image is displayed to the world when they see His people going through them.** It is not about God securing His people from the troubles of the World it is showing the world that **God is sovereign over the troubles** because it brings the knowledge of Him to the world.

**GOSPEL:** Now, fortunately for us, we live on the other side of history like Paul and we **know our God, Jesus,** and He went through the same trials. In the garden He questioned God but perfectly answered back, “not my will but let yours be done.” **Jesus from the cross cries out in surprise and questions why did you leave me!?** So, we would never be alone when we bear our cross, Jesus is always with us, even when we question and even when we don’t understand. Jesus knows, and **that is good enough for us...**

### **3. Our Response: Accepting, Reflecting, and Lamenting**

In the end for Hab, he comes to a realization, **it will not change.** The course that God has set will not be undone.

<sup>12</sup> Are you not from everlasting,  
O Lord my God, my Holy One?  
We shall not die.  
O Lord, you have ordained them as a judgment,  
and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof.

Hab still clings to His God – He knows He’s right, He’s Holy, and it is not the end. It is the reflection of Peter when everyone leaves Jesus when **He gives them the HARD TRUTH that unless you partake of Him, put your trust in Him for Salvation,**



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**you cannot have any place in the kingdom.** When Jesus sees everyone goes except the twelve, Peter told Him, “you have the words of life, where else could we go?”

It is when we realize this, only then, can we get on with living out a Faith that just got Real, a **REAL FAITH** when we accept that come what may, **we will not leave our God.**

Here’s what that means this morning. It may not be the COVID19 Pandemic that has got you messed up it may be something else from your past, **now hold on this is about to get real:**

- Maybe you have suffered, outside your will, by someone else’s hand.
- You endured a divorced home growing up and it caused you to lose some innocence in your childhood, **that was God’s will** and it was allowed for your good and the proclamation of the gospel.
- You may have even suffered abuse by a parent, you endured rape, you aborted a child, you were abandoned by people you love, **God allowed it not to destroy you but to conform you to the image of His Son** for your good and the proclamation of the Gospel.
- You have been plagued by disease, you have lost someone to cancer, your child got sick and died, and God heard your cries and did not answer your prayers like you wanted because it **made you like Jesus**, it promotes God’s agenda of Salvation, it brings the glory of the Kingdom to the world.
- It made you cry in the night, but your joy comes in the morning **for you realized you can’t leave your God!**

We all have to, right now, like Habakkuk’s grieving, like Jesus mourning over His people, we accept the fallen world and accept that God knows better, we cling to Him, we cry, and only then are we are prepared to live for Him.

When we lament, when we grieve for the things of hurt in our past, when we recognize we were never alone in it, it is only then can we move forward.

- Lamenting **helps you to sympathize** with people and help them in hard times.



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- Lamenting helps you **not to blame** other people for your pain because you have effectively dealt with your own grief.
- Lamenting helps you to **hope again for a future**, because you stop trying to fix a past by trying to ensure your security now.
- Lamenting helps you escape anger and depression because you **learn to accept life**.

Family, friends, guests, spend some time this week, let God know about your frustrations, your disappointments and your fears, you have been given grace as His people to talk to Him in that way. Then choose to believe that it was all done under God’s sovereign control. Lament a little over your losses and let’s move forward in trusting our God, accepting **the Hard Truth**, and let’s realize that our ***Faith is about to get REAL...***

#### PRAY

#### COMMUNION

#### BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that doesn’t always answer the way we want but always answers the way we need Him to.

Go in the name of the Son, that endured the punishment for sin alone, so we could walk with Him by our side.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that comforts us, helps us lament, and enables us then to help others in their hour of need.