

Sermon #11 — Habakkuk Series

Title: **“A WORK YOU
WILL NOT BELIEVE.”**

Text: Habakkuk 1:5

Subject: *Substitution*

Date: Sunday Morning — October 24, 2010

Tape # *Habakkuk #10*

Reading: *2 Corinthians 5:1-6:2*

Introduction:

There is nothing in all the world so tormenting as guilt. I do not doubt that **the very fires of hell that cannot be quenched** are relentlessly fueled by an indescribable sense of guilt tormenting the soul. **The worm that never dies** in the pit of the damned, **that undying worm that forever gnaws upon the fully awakened consciences of the damned is guilt.** But **even in this world,** there is nothing more tormenting to a man than a sense of guilt. **I am not talking about mere sense of guilt with regard to men, but a consciousness of guilt before the infinite, holy, eternal God!**

Some of you are struggling with such guilt. Your screaming conscience torments you day and night. You have tried to silence it with prayers, Bible

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reading, moral reformation, and religious duty. But when you toss upon your bed in the lonely watches of the night, alone before God, you find that your bed is too short and your covering too narrow, and you cannot rest. **Your refuge of lies is swept away in a moment before the bar of God’s holiness, justice and truth. In your very soul, you cry and weep, tremble and quake, with an overwhelming sense of guilt and the fear of eternal damnation.** You cannot rest. You have found, and find day after day, that there is *“no rest for the wicked.”*

Some of you who are my brothers and sisters in Christ, true believers, some of you who are born of God, yet struggle with a horrible sense of guilt.

- You know that Christ paid your sin debt; but you still carry the weight of guilt. Oh, what an unbearable weight it is!
- You know that the Lord Jesus has redeemed you from the curse of the law; but you still carry the weight of the condemned in your soul.
- You know that Christ is the Lord your Righteousness, that you are made the

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righteousness of God in him; but your soul is still filled with guilt.

Why? Because you are keenly aware of your own, inward lusts and sin. You still bear your own iniquities in your soul.

There is nothing that makes the life of a poor, tender soul so painfully bitter as this oppressive, unbearable load of sin and guilt. Satan knows that there is no yoke so oppressive, no bondage so cruel to your soul as this. Therefore, he constantly accuses you, and your flesh says, “Amen,” to his accusations.

The only relief there is for a guilty, screaming, accusing, condemning conscience is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You will never know the joy of peace before God, of peace in your soul, the peace that comes from a satisfied conscience, except Christ be revealed in you.

“In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.

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I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

Sure never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

A second look He gave, which said,
‘I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may'st live.’”

John Newton

A MESSAGE FROM GOD

I have a message from God for you. It is specifically to you who carry the weight of sin and guilt in your

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souls that I speak. **If God the Holy Spirit will give you ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to believe what he has sent me to declare to you this day, you will find the message worth more than a mountain of gold to your soul.**

Turn with me to Habakkuk 1. But, I must begin my message by telling you that you will not believe it, wondrous, marvelous, glorious as it is, you will not believe it. — The fact is you cannot be saved, except God perform a work of grace for you and in you by Christ Jesus. Yet, when he promised he would perform this great work, he plainly asserted that you would not believe it, though it be declared to you in the plainest terms possible. The title of my message is **“A WORK YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE.”** — You will find my text in Habakkuk 1:5.

Six hundred years before God sent his darling Son into the world to *“save his people from there sins,”* he said...

“Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in

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your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.” (Habakkuk 1:5)

There is no question that this word from our God, this wonder of heaven, this marvel of history, this incomprehensible mystery that the Lord God declared he would perform is the redemption of poor, lost, ruined, damned sinners, by sin-atonement, substitutionary sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit specifically applies this prophecy only to that which Christ accomplished in his death at Calvary as the sinner’s Substitute (Acts 13:38-41).

“38 Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 **Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;** 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.” (Acts 13:38-41)

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Now, turn with me to 2nd Corinthians 5, and I will declare this wondrous thing to you. — 2nd Corinthians 5:21.

“For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

From the depths of my inmost soul, I pray that the Lord will enable me, at least once, before I die, to preach the message of this text as it ought to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. I will not strive to be eloquent or impressive. I want to simply tell you, to the best of my ability, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, what God says in this single verse. — Hold your Bible open on your lap, and follow me through the words of this text. When I am done, I want you to see that everything I am preaching to you is right here in this text.

Illustration: “He doesn’t do anything except state what the text says.”

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Well, I want to state exactly what this text says, no more and no less, just what the text says and in the very words of the text itself.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

This is the greatest transaction that ever took place upon the earth, the most marvelous sight that men ever saw, and the most stupendous wonder that heaven ever executed. — Jesus Christ our Lord was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. — Jesus Christ, the spotless Son of God, was made sin!

If ever we find rest, peace and joy in our souls, if ever a sinner is made to be of good cheer, having the blessed knowledge of the forgiveness of sin, it must be fetched from that which is declared in our text. — “*He hath made him sin for us.*” No sinner

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will ever find real rest for his soul, a bed that he can stretch himself upon, and a cover broad enough to wrap himself in, but this. — *“He hath made him sin for us.”*

Let’s look at 2nd Corinthians 5:21 word by word. May God the Holy Spirit now speak his Word to your hearts through these stammering lips of clay.

“FOR” — This refers us back to all that Paul has said in this chapter. He is calling sinners to faith in Christ; and the basis of his call is the fact that the work of redemption has been fully accomplished by Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

(2 Corinthians 5:17-21) “Therefore if any man [be] in Christ, [he is] a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are

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ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

21 “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

“HE” — The Triune Jehovah

“HATH” — At One Time in the Past

“MADE” — Wondrously, Mysteriously,
Unexplainably Caused to Become

“HIM” — The Lord Jesus Christ, the Darling of Heaven, The Son of God, Our Divine Mediator, Our Covenant Surety, the God-man, the Man-God.

- The Infinite God
- The Holy Man ——— “*Him Who knew no sin!*”

“SIN” — Our translators inserted the words “*to be*” in italics, to let us know that they were inserted by the translators. — “*He hath made him sin...*” — Not

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a Sin-offering — Not a Sacrifice for Sin — Not Reckoned to be Sin — Not the Consequences of Sin — Not Treated as if He were Made Sin — Not made to Appear Like He was Made Sin — Not Sin was Imputed to Him — Not the Punishment of Sin. —

“He hath made him sin...”

- All that Sin Is!
- All that is Involved in Sin!
- Iniquity!
- Transgression!
- Sin!
- That Awful Mass of Guilt!
- Go to Gethsemane!

(Psalms 69:19-20) “Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries [are] all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked [for some] to take pity, but [there was] none; and for comforters, but I found none.”

- Go to Calvary!

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(Psalms 22:1-3) “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [why art thou so] far from helping me, [and from] the words of my roaring? 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. 3 But thou [art] holy, [O thou] that inhabitest the praises of Israel.”

(Habakkuk 1:13) “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.”

(Psalms 22:6) “But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

(Psalms 22:14-15) “I am poured out like water, and all **my bones** are out of joint: **my heart** is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 **My strength** is dried up like a potsherd; and **my tongue** cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.”

(Psalms 40:12) “For **innumerable evils** have compassed me about: **mine iniquities** have taken

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hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: **therefore my heart faileth me.**”

(Psalms 69:5) “O God, thou knowest **my foolishness**; and **my sins** are not hid from thee.”

(Psalms 69:19-20) “Thou hast known **my reproach**, and **my shame**, and **my dishonour**: mine adversaries [are] all before thee. 20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked [for some] to take pity, but [there was] none; and for comforters, but I found none.”

(Lamentations 1:12-14) “[Is it] nothing to you, all ye that pass by? **behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow**, which is done unto me, **wherewith the LORD hath afflicted** [me] in the day of his fierce anger. 13 From above hath **he sent fire into my bones**, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: **he hath made me desolate [and] faint all the day.** 14 **The**

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yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, [and] come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into [their] hands, [from whom] I am not able to rise up.”

All three Persons in the Eternal Godhead made him sin.

- God the Father in Eternity (Revelation 13:8)
- God the Son at Calvary (1 Peter 2:24)
- God the Holy Spirit in Conversion (John 16:8-11)

“FOR US” — God’s Elect — All Who Trust Christ — For Sinners

“THAT WE MIGHT BE MADE” — Present, Passive Continual Experience.

“THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD” — Remember, this is word “*made*” is talking about a present, passive, continual experience of grace! **We are made the righteousness of God in...**

- Justification,

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- Sanctification (Regeneration),
- Resurrection.

(Jeremiah 23:6) “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

(Jeremiah 33:16) “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”

(Jeremiah 50:20) “In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”

(1 Peter 4:1-2) “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in

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the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”

Now, watch this ——

“IN HIM” — In Union with Him!

(1 John 3:5) “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

What a wonder! What a mystery! What blessed good news! But the Lord God declared, 600 years before he performed it...

(Habakkuk 1:5) “Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.”

And thus it came to pass with the Jews of old (Matthew 21:15; Romans 9:31-10:4).

(Matthew 21:15) “And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did,

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and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased.”

(Romans 9:31-10:4) “31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

10:1 ¶ Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”
(Romans 9:31-10:4)

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(“28 And though they found no cause of death [in him], yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took [him] down from the tree, and laid [him] in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, [now] no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another [psalm], Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom

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God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 **Beware therefore**, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

(Acts 13:48 AV) “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”

Would you go home not guilty before God? Would you forever silence that screaming, damning conscience that torments you night and day? — Trust this blessed Savior! Oh, may God the Holy Spirit give you grace to trust my Redeemer!

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as

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though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

6:1 ¶ We then, [as] workers together [with him], beseech [you] also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now [is] the accepted time; behold, now [is] the day of salvation.)” (2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2)

Amen.