

Sermon #18 — *Habakkuk Series*

Title: **FROM FEAR TO FAITH**

Text: Habakkuk 2:1-4

Subject: *Peace in Believing*

Date: Tuesday Evening—January 18, 2011

Tape # *Habakkuk #18*

Readings: *Darin Duff and Larry Criss*

Introduction:

The title of my message tonight is **FROM FEAR TO FAITH**. My reason for preaching this message, my desire for you who seek to live for God in this world of woe is that the God of all grace may “*fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost*” (Romans 15:13). Turn to the Book of Habakkuk; and I will show you how the Lord God moved the prophet Habakkuk from fear to faith.

Habakkuk’s world was in chaos. His world was turned upside down. He saw evil everywhere. The Lord God was about to destroy his nation. But in the midst of great confusion and heartache, **God’s prophet Habakkuk threw himself upon the character of God and the promise of God**, our Rock of Salvation. How wise! Throwing himself on

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God, the prophet moved from fear to faith and found blessed peace.

GOD'S PROMISE

Though he beheld evil all around him, spiritual wickedness in high places and in low places, though to all outward appearance, it looked as though wickedness prevailed everywhere and the cause of God was overturned, **the Lord God promised that He would perform His purpose of grace.** He assured His prophet that He would perform His covenant promises, that He would accomplish the redemption and salvation of His chosen (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.” (Habakkuk 1:5)

That is the promise of God; and the promise of God is sure. Let us believe God (Romans 8:28-30).
When it appears that darkness and disorder,

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wickedness and ungodliness prevail everywhere, in your house, in the church house, in the state house, and in the White House, as it does in our day, children of God, we have still the promise of God; and God's promise is sure!

GOD'S CHARACTER

God's promise is as sure as His character is good; and Habakkuk found God's character the solace his soul needed. He eased himself with the realization that...

- If God sends pain His purpose is to profit our souls.
- If our heavenly Father sends bitterness it is for our betterment.
- If the Lord God sends heaviness it is for our holiness.
- If He sends sorrow it is for our salvation.

God's very character assures us of these things (Habakkuk 1:12).

“Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O

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LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction.” (Habakkuk 1:12)

A CALL TO FAITH

Before I proceed any further, I must pause to speak directly to you who are yet without Christ. When you think of death and eternity, I know how fearful your hearts are. And you have great reason to be fearful. **The wrath is upon you.** — “*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*” (John 3:36). **The very wrath of God that fuels the fires of hell is upon you.** In a breath you will be in hell, unless God himself gives you another breath. **But you don’t have to go to hell.** There is a Savior for sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. Our God calls himself “**the God of all grace**” because “**He delighteth in mercy!**” It is written in the Book, “**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.**” O sinner, come to Christ and live forever. Bathe your filthy soul the fountain of Christ’s precious blood, and be clean forever. Cast

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yourself on God, just as Habakkuk did, just as I do now.

- **The promises of God are sure.** He promises salvation to all who come to Him. He promises salvation to all who trust His Son (Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 11:28-30).
- **The character of God is goodness.** When Moses asked to see His glory, the Lord God said, **“I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee.”** God’s goodness is His glory; all the goodness of God is in Christ; and all the goodness of God is in Christ for sinners!

A WAITING PROPHET

Back to Habakkuk. — Here is a waiting prophet. In chapter 2 we hear the faithful prophet speak as one determined to wait on the Lord. He knows that the best thing he can do is wait. **In every trial, in every gut wrenching experience, the very best thing we can do, the very best thing is wait, wait upon the Lord in submissive, expectant, confident faith** (Habakkuk 2:1; Isaiah 40:28-31).

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(Habakkuk 2:1) “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”

(Isaiah 40:28-31) “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, [that] the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [there is] no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.”

Habakkuk said, “**I will watch to see what He will say unto me.**” Oh, how we need to hear the Word of the Lord. Having presented his problem to the Lord Habakkuk said I will leave it there. — “**Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee:**

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He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved
(Psalm 55:22).

Cast thy burden on the Lord;
Lean thou only on His word:
Ever will He be thy stay,
Though the heavens shall melt away.

Ever in the raging storm,
Thou shalt see His cheering form,
Hear His pledge of coming aid:
“It is I, be not afraid.”

Cast thy burden at His feet;
Linger near His mercy seat:
He will lead thee by the hand
Gently to the better land.

He will gird thee by His power,
In thy weary, fainting hour;
Lean, then, ever on His Word;
Cast thy burden on the Lord.

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We often sing, admonishing one another to “Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.” We have little trouble with the first part, but the “leave it there” part is another story. **Turn to Psalm 37**. As **Martin Lloyd-Jones** wrote...

“Having failed to reach a solution, despite seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing more to do but to take it to God in prayer. But what so frequently happens is this. We go on our knees and tell God about the thing that is worrying us; we tell Him that we cannot solve the difficulty ourselves, that we cannot understand; and we ask Him to deal with it and to show us His way. Then the moment we get up from our knees we begin to worry about the problem again.”

(Psalms 37:1-8) “**Fret not thyself because of evildoers**, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. 2 For **they shall soon be cut down** like the grass, and wither as the green herb. 3 **Trust in the LORD**, and do good; [so] shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt

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be fed. 4 **Delight thyself also in the LORD**; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 **Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring [it] to pass.** 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.”

“7 ¶ **Rest in the LORD**, and **wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.** 8 **Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.**”

THE TOWER

Second, Habakkuk went to “*the tower*” and stayed there. How happy, how blessed we would be if we would do just that. Christ is our High Tower. We would be wise to run to Him (Proverbs 18:10; Psalms 18:2; 27:1; 61:3-4; 91:2; 144:2; Isaiah 32:1-2).

(Proverbs 18:10) “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is

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safe.”

(Psalms 18:2) “The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.”

(Psalms 27:1) “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

(Psalms 61:3-4) “For thou hast been a shelter for me, [and] a strong tower from the enemy. 4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.”

(Psalms 91:2) “I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

(Psalms 144:1-2) “Blessed [be] the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, [and] my fingers to fight: 2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my

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shield, and [he] in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.”

(Isaiah 32:1-2) “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. 2 And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

Habakkuk quit looking at his trouble and started looking to the Lord, the Rock of Israel, the Triune Jehovah.

- He didn’t look to the philosophers of the day. He looked to the Lord.
- He didn’t take his troubles to a neighbor or to a shrink. He took them to the Lord.
- He didn’t go to a counselor. He set himself on his tower.

If we look to the Lord, we cease to look at our troubles; and that is the secret and the basis of spiritual peace (Philippians 4:4-7).

“Rejoice in the Lord alway: [and] again I say,

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Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”
(Philippians 4:4-7)

Like Habakkuk need to get up into our watch-tower, away from the common affairs of the world, away from our troubles, and get alone with God. Get to the Mercy-Seat and you'll stay out of the mad house. Look to Christ and not your problems, and you will find life far more delightful. **When we quit whining and start believing God, we will find peace.**

GOD'S ANSWER

Habakkuk set himself upon his tower, and said, — “**I will ... watch to see what He will say unto me.**” He is in his tower, expecting to hear from God. That's the third thing I want you to see. **Habakkuk expected God to answer him.** Oh, Spirit of God,

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give me such expectancy. Give us expectant hearts, expecting to hear God speak...

- When we open His Word.
- When we come into His house.
- When we walk by the way.

Habakkuk is waiting for the Lord undertake in answer to his prayer. His sight is fixed on God. He is expecting God to answer his prayer. Imagine that. — Here is a man expecting God to answer him! God answers our prayers according to His own holy will, in His own way, and at His own time.

BY THE WORD — Perhaps the most common way the Lord answers us is through His holy and inspired Word the Bible. The Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105, 130).

(Psalms 119:105) “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

(Psalms 119:130) “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.”

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The Word of God directs us. **As we read the sacred Scriptures we should listen for God to speak to us.** We need to watch and wait in the study of God's precious Word.

THE SPIRIT — The Lord graciously answers our prayers by the witness of His Spirit within (Isaiah 30:18-21).

(Isaiah 30:18-21) “And **therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you,** and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD [is] a God of judgment: **blessed [are] all they that wait for him.** 19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: **he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry;** when he shall hear it, **he will answer thee.** 20 And [though] the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21 And **thine ears shall hear a word**

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behind thee, saying, This [is] the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:18-21)

HIS PROVIDENCE — Along with His Word, along with the inner witness of His Holy Spirit, the Lord God answers our hearts cries by the direction of His providence, so ordering the events of our lives that His voice is clearly heard and it becomes plain what He is saying. **The Lord providentially shuts doors and opens doors** (Acts 16:6-14).

(Acts 16:6-14) “Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly

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gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next [day] to Neapolis; 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, [and] a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted [thither]. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

Illustration: If this congregation had called me as pastor six months earlier than you did, I would not have come. Let me tell you why.

Let us ever watch “to see what He will say.” We are told that Habakkuk stood upon his tower, **making use of the means** he had within his reach that he

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might know the mind and will of God. — Get above the rat race of the world. Get above the distractions of the ungodly.

- Read and study the Word of God.
- Attend the ministry of the Word.
- Seize every opportunity of public worship.
- Take time to reflect upon the past. How often the Lord God tells us to “*remember.*”

(Colossians 3:1-3) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

GRACE SURE

Fourth, look at Habakkuk 2:2-3, and see that God’s grace is sure. Here the Lord God gives Habakkuk a very clear answer. He does not take away the prophet’s pain. He does not stop the Chaldeans from coming. He does not alter the circumstances that gave

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Habakkuk so much trouble. But the Lord God answered the prophet's prayer magnanimously.

(Habakkuk 2:2-3) “And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make [it] plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. 3 For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

The vision God gave Habakkuk was a reiteration of His promise of salvation by Christ (Habakkuk 1:5; 2:14).

(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.”

(Habakkuk 2:14) “For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

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- The vision was specific.
- The vision was for an appointed (specific) time.
— Due Time — The Fulness of Time

The Lord God caused His prophet to understand and rest in the fact that all His works of providence, no matter how painful and bitter they may be in our temporal experience of things, are his “**chariots of salvation**” (Habakkuk 3:9, 13).

(Habakkuk 3:8) “Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that **thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?**”

(Habakkuk 3:13) “**Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed;** thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.”

TWO GROUPS

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Now, look at verse 4.

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”
(Habakkuk 2:4)

There are two groups of people here tonight, two groups of people in this world. Each of our families is divided into two groups.

- Proud rebels who will not believe God.
- And the just who live by faith in Christ.

Illustration: Martin Luther said this about Habakkuk’s words — “*the just shall live by faith.*” — “Before those words broke upon my mind I hated God and was angry with him because, not content with frightening us sinners by the law and by the miseries of life, he still further increased our torture by the gospel. But when, by the Spirit of God, I understood those words, “**The just shall live by faith! The just shall live by faith!**” – then I felt born again like a new man; I entered through the open doors into the very Paradise of God.”

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The man who lives by faith in Christ is righteous. The man who does not live by faith in Christ is not righteous in the sight of God no matter how good he may be. Right here is the great divider of men in God's books: — Those who believe in Christ and those who do not. **Your life is either based on faith in Christ or rebellion, in proud independence from God, in willful unbelief.** You are either saved or lost, just or unjust, righteous or unrighteous, bound for heaven or bound for hell, depending on whether you trust Christ or hate Him. There is no in-between ground. **“The just will live by his faith.”** When you understand the meaning of those words, then you can say as Martin Luther, “I felt born again like a new man.”

Will you or will you not trust Christ? Will you bow and live forever; or will you go on in your obstinate hatred of God and in your proud rebellion until the wrath of God that abides on you crushes you down into hell forever? Oh, God help you to believe, for Christ's sake.

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If ever we come to know God, if ever we learn to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we will begin to learn something about the peace of God that passeth all understanding, as Habakkuk expressed it at the end of his prophecy.

(Habakkuk 3:17-19) “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither [shall] fruit [be] in the vines; the labour 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 stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God [is] my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ [feet], and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

(Romans 15:13) “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” (Romans 15:13)

Amen