

In the Dip

Habakkuk 2:1-3 HCSB I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower. I will watch to see what He will say to me and what I should reply about my complaint. (2) The LORD answered me: Write down this vision; clearly inscribe it on tablets so one may easily read it. (3) For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late.

“Objection, your Honor. Your honor, I object.” That’s basically what Habakkuk has said so far. If you weren’t here last week, let me give you a review. We are in the middle of a series focused on the book of “Habakkuk”, which is one of the twelve Minor Prophets in the Old Covenant. Habakkuk was written around the year 600 BC or so. Habakkuk is a name that actually means to embrace or to wrestle, and it is a book that is written with a lot of judicial language.

God told the prophet Habakkuk, “Tell your people I am going to have to destroy them because they are wicked”.

Being a godly priest and prophet, chances are Habakkuk might have said, “Well, you’re right. They are wicked and I understand.”

But God added a little twist to the end and He said, “What I am going to do is, I am going to use the Babylonians.” It’s at this point that Habakkuk said, “Huh? W ha...uh...ha...hay! Hang on a second! You’re going to use who?”

You see, the Babylonians, they were much, much more evil than the people of Judah. Listen to the Psalmist’s complaint:

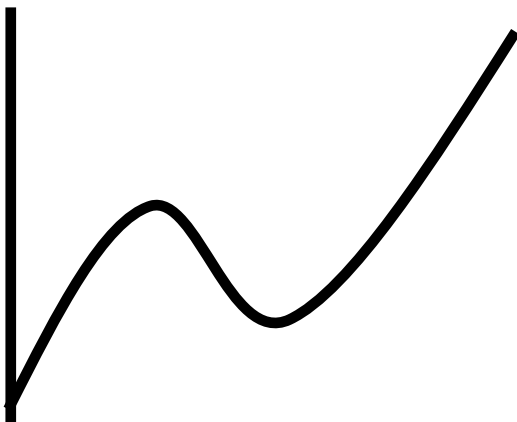
- **Psalms 137:8-9 HCSB** Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who pays you back what you have done to us. (9) Happy is he who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rocks.

The Psalmist cried out to God to repay the Babylonians for what they had done to the people of Israel. Apparently the Babylonians had smashed little kids against the rocks and killed them. So God was using these really evil people to destroy what we would deem to be a lesser evil people.

And Habakkuk basically said, “I object, Your Honor. Objection!” In fact this book was written with a judicial language as if Habakkuk was going to say, “God - You know I worship You, and You know I’m going to honor You, but I’m taking You to court because I have evidence to prove that Your actions are not just. God - what You’re doing does not seem fair.”

Today, if you are facing something and you say, “I don’t understand, God. You could do something about this. If I were You, I would, but You’re not and I don’t understand why.” If that’s the way you feel about any situation then I’m certain the book of Habakkuk will speak to you.

The question we are going to wrestle with today is, “What do you do when you’re in the dip?” If you weren’t here last week, let me show you what the dip is.



We looked last week at a beginning point, and let's say this is someone who does not yet know Christ. They are not in a relationship with God, but yet, someday, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God reveals Himself to them and they call on the forgiveness and the grace of Jesus, and spiritually, they are born anew and their whole world just turns upside down, or actually right side up, and they are forgiven.

There is this huge spiritual rush of adrenaline, an excitement, and God starts answering prayers. And whenever they pull up to stop lights, all of the stoplights turn green, and God is just smiling upon them and everything's incredible. It's the high of the person who just met the grace of Christ.

Then life continues, and after a while, this on-fire, excited believer may go through some more difficult times and end up right here – in the dip. Maybe God didn't answer a prayer, or maybe this person lost their job. Or maybe they started to struggle with certain sins that came back and wouldn't leave them alone, or maybe their kids started making bad decisions. Or, maybe there was something that felt like God could do what God SHOULD do, and everything would be okay, but God didn't, and all of a sudden, they're right here going, "Wait a minute, God, I thought You were going to be like this, but now, You're not doing what You could." Henry Blackaby refers to this as a crisis of belief. They say, "Now, wait a minute. I thought it was going to be like this, God. Why aren't You doing what I know You could?"

When a person enters into a crisis of belief, there's one of two very common reactions. The first is to want to go back to the last spiritual high. They want to say, "Basically, I am going to pretend like this isn't happening, and if we can just go back to this point, then everything is going to be okay."

Or, what a lot of people do is, they say, "Okay, God, if You're not going to do what I know You could do, then forget You. I'm going to go back to the place I used to be and just assume that if You could and You're not, then You're not good and so I don't trust You. God, I'm going to forget about it, and go back here." Back to the beginning they go.

We learned last week, though, that the name Habakkuk actually means to embrace or to wrestle. If this person who comes to a point of crisis in their faith will continue to embrace God, or even wrestle with Him through the difficult times, things may not get better - yet. They may even continue to get worse! But a true believer can live out the New Testament principle, where the book of James says,

- [James 1:2-4 HCSB](#) Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (4) But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

A true believer will continue to embrace God, even though things may not get any better at first. And as a result this kind of person can grow much closer to God than they were in the past. In fact, if you look very closely at those who are closest to God, they are often those who have been through the most difficult times and experienced the truth that God proves Himself faithful in those dark days.

What do you do when you are in the dip? Today, we will let the book of Habakkuk speak to us about three specific things that we can do while in the dip. These three things will come from the first three verses of Habakkuk chapter 2.

Here's what Habakkuk says. He's just heard the news that God is going to destroy his people, using the evil Babylonians, and so he says, "Okay, here's my plan". Verse 1,

- [Habakkuk 2:1 HCSB](#) I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower. I will watch to see what He will say to me and what I should reply about my complaint.

In verses 2 and 3 the Lord speaks up. The Bible records Him as saying,

- [Habakkuk 2:2-3 HCSB](#) The LORD answered me: Write down this vision; clearly inscribe it on tablets so one may easily read it. (3) For the vision is yet for the

appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late.

What do you do when you are in the dip? What do you do when you are struggling and you know that God could do something, but He's not, and He just doesn't seem fair and life just doesn't make sense and you're wondering, "God, where are You? What are you doing?"

We do three things that we learn from this example. The first thing scripture teaches us to do is, we stop and listen. We stop and listen.

1) LISTEN

I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me... Habakkuk 2:1b

If you look at what Habakkuk did, he basically said, "God, I don't like this. I'm complaining to You," and the beautiful thing is, God seemed to respectfully hear this. It was as if God was saying, "Sure. You're allowed to wrestle with Me."

And Habakkuk says, "I don't like what You're doing. I've stated my case. Now, God, it's Your turn to reply. I need some answers. God, what do You have to say for Yourself?"

Verse 1, here's what he said. Habakkuk said, "I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts." In other words, "I'm going to climb upon the wall, and I am going to look to see what God is doing," and he says this. "I will look to see what God will SAY TO ME."

Too often we just whine about what's going on and then we go on about our lives. Many of us never stop to listen. "God, what are You saying?" You see, here's a beautiful thing about God. God is a relational God, who loves to speak to His children. God is a God who speaks, and if you will stop to listen, God will often speak to you. How will He speak? All sorts of different ways.

1. God can speak audibly. I've never heard His audible voice, but I know people who have, and I believe that He can.
2. God can also speak through His word. Every single day, He can speak to you through His word.
3. God can speak to you through circumstances.
4. If you look around, God can speak to you through other people.

But hear me well. Though God will often choose to speak to you, sometimes He won't, and that's His prerogative because He is God. We are to wait on HIM – not the other way around.

Now, here's the deal. If you will listen to Him, and if He will speak to you, you may not like what He says. Habakkuk didn't like it. He probably thought... "Oh, this wasn't what I was looking for, God."

But at least when He speaks, you will know exactly where God stands, and so you stop and say, "God, I don't understand. I don't like it. This doesn't make sense. Speak to me." And if you are silent before Him, God will often respond. Now, even if He says something that you don't like, at least you know where you stand, and you know what God is up to.

Cast your minds to the New Covenant, to the apostle Paul. According to 2 Corinthians 12:7 he had what was known as a "thorn in his flesh", some kind of physical ailment that made his job harder and apparently made him socially repulsive.

- [Galatians 4:13-14 HCSB](#) you know that previously I preached the gospel to you in physical weakness, (14) and though my physical condition was a trial for you, you did not despise or reject me. On the contrary, you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus *Himself*.

Many people think it had to do with his eyes because he said in the following verse,

- [Galatians 4:15 HCSB](#) What happened to this blessedness of yours? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.

And some take that to be his implication when he said,

- [Galatians 6:11 HCSB](#) Look at what large letters I have written to you in my own handwriting.

Paul said that he prayed over and over again. “God, I know You can do something about it. Please do. Take it away. Remove it.” Three times, he begged,

“God, I’m pleading with You. Take it away.

I’m pleading with You. Take it away.

I’m pleading with You. Take it away,”

And God said basically, “I could, but I’ve decided not to. No. My answer to you is no. Why? Because I am going to do something even better than take it away, and you may not understand, but I am going to teach you that My grace is all that you need. You see, I could do that, but I’m not going to, because I’m going to do something different inside of you.” When you don’t understand, and when you are in the dip, you need to stop – listen - and let God speak to you.

What do you do when you are in the dip? The first thing you do is you listen.

The second thing that you do when you are in the dip is, you write. You write what God shows you.

2) WRITE

Then the LORD replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. Habakkuk 2:2

Habakkuk said, “Where are You? What’s going on?” and God said, “You want to know? Habakkuk, take notes.” Okay? This is what God said in verse 2. “The Lord replied,” help me out. And He said ...what did He tell him to do? He said to “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.”

Why does God want us to write it down? Well, he was going to say to Habakkuk, “Years later, when I prove Myself just and true, I want it in writing so everyone can see that I am a God of My word.”

Now, it’s also for our benefit, too, because if you are like me and your wife has ever sent you to the grocery store with maybe only two things to remember, something happens on the way there, and Satan messes with your mind, or YOU mess it up, even though you’ve only got two things to remember.

Write it down so that you will remember! When God says something to you, you want to record it, because your spiritual enemy is an expert at stealing the seeds of truth that God wants to plant. God may show you something, and I can’t tell you how many times this has happened to me, where I’m wrestling with something and I don’t understand, and I’m praying. “God, are You there?” And, “God, what’s going on?” And I feel like God shows me something. I’ll recognize, “Okay. That was obviously from God.”

But then if I don’t write it down, an hour later, I’ll start thinking, “Well, I THINK that was probably from God,” and then a week later, I’m like, “Well, I don’t know, man. Maybe I had pizza too late at night, you know. I had indigestion and I’m just blaming it on God or whatever.” And it’s just like the sense that God has spoken seems to vanish unless I write it down. When I write it down, though, it becomes a spiritual anchor that, “yes, I believe that God has spoken,” and I’ve got a reference point to go back to.

What do you do? What do you do, when you hit this crisis of belief? “Where are You, God? I don’t understand.” You stop and you listen. “God, what are You saying? God, where are You?” Then, when He shows you anything at all, document it. Record it. Write it down.

What do you do when you are in the dip? The first thing you do is you listen.

The second thing that you do is, you write. You write what God shows you.

The third thing that you do when you are in the dip is you wait.

2) WAIT

For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie. Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late. - Habakkuk 2:3 HCSB

Waiting is awkward, isn't it? You, don't want silence. I mean, we like movement or change so there's at least a SEMBLANCE of progress. We are so into instant return, instant gratification, and many of us, we don't like to wait. We don't WANT to wait, and yet, watch what God says to the prophet in verse three.

He says, "For the ch'azown, for the vision is yet ... what? Say it aloud, "The revelation, it is yet for the appointed time; it testifies about the end and will not lie." Look at what God says. He said, "Though it delays." Help me out, and everybody said, "Though it delays, WAIT FOR IT; since it will certainly come and not be late."

When God promises something, you may have to wait a while, but you can take His promise to the bank. Some of you right now, you are in the waiting zone. You believe God has shown you something. You've recorded it, and now, you're waiting and you are waiting and you are waiting and you are waiting, and you are afraid that it will not come to pass. Remember this. God's delays are not God's denials. When God has promised something, it will come to pass.

When you look through scripture, you can see example after example after example of people waiting. God would promise something and then they'd wait.

"**Moses**, I'm going to use you to deliver God's people and rebuild the nation," and then Moses goes on a forty-year wandering tour. Forty years! That's like two hundred and eighty something cat years, which couldn't be good for anything at all, being forty, forty years. What does he do? Wait, and wait, and wait, and wait, and then FINALLY God brings it to pass.

Consider **Joseph**. God says, "You are going to be a great leader." What happens? His brothers beat the snot out of him. Throw him into a pit. Sell him into slavery. He spends two years in prison, and it's years before God fulfills the promise and elevates him to second in charge over all of Egypt.

The apostle **Paul** has a vision, meets Christ. He's transformed. He says, "I'm called to preach. That's what I'm here to do. This is all. I am compelled to preach the Gospel. This is the one thing I'm here to do," and it's thirteen years before He ever says, "Open your Bible and turn to this." Thirteen years before he gets to preach his very first message.

You sometimes have to just wait. Now, here is what happens. A lot of people think, "Okay. I'm waiting, so I'm stuck right here." When they think of waiting, they think of no movement. But what does a good waiter do? Does he just stand around filing his nails? A good waiter serves, right? Here's what you do when you're waiting. You keep serving the Lord the whole time. Waiting doesn't mean there is no movement. In fact, there may be more movement when you are waiting than ever before. You are serving the Lord. Whatever you do, you do it unto the glory of God. You continue to wait on Him, and you serve Him. You see, even when you don't understand, you continue to serve Him, and you wait on Him, and you serve Him.

The Hebrew word for appointed time is the word mow'ed [mo'ade]. What does it mean? If you are taking notes, write this down. It means an appointment or an affixed time. At the mow'ed, it is coming. It's kind of like a woman who is nine months pregnant. When it's time, it's time. It's like a freight train going full speed, you just can't stop it.

When it is the mow'ed there's nothing you can do to speed it up, because it is God's time. But there's also nothing that anyone else can do to slow it down, because it is God's time. Wait for it. Wait for it. Wait for it.

You want to know how long Habakkuk waited for it? A long, long, long time. In fact, most of his people didn't even get to see it come about. It happened in the next generation. It wasn't until the next generation that God's promise was fulfilled. Even if you do not see His promises fulfilled, believe me, they will be fulfilled, because God's word is absolutely true.

Some of you right now, you are, you are in the waiting zone. You are in the dip, and you believe God has promised you something, but you don't see it. I want to re-read to you this verse, but this time, from the Living Bible, and when I do, I really pray this speaks spiritual encouragement to you. Here's how the Living Bible translates it.

"These things I plan, God says they won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely the time approaches when division will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient. They will not be overdue a single day."

God says, "Habakkuk, do this. Listen. I am going to speak to you. Take notes and then wait." And what you are going to say is that, "I understand that the Babylonians are bad and you think they need to get theirs. Well, they are going to. When I am ready, they're going to get it, and it's going to be good."

It's kind of like when you're with someone who is really good at something. You look at a situation and you look at how they're handling it and you think to yourself "That's completely wrong. They're going about this the wrong way." And if you have the temerity to actually voice this opinion, the pro looks at you with a smile, winks and says "Watch and learn, watch and learn."

This is what God is saying, you know, "You just wait, because I am the Heavenly Father, who is just and righteous, and believe me, in the right time and in exactly the most appropriate way they will get due punishment for their sins."

Here's how God says it. In verse four, He says this. "See Babylon, he is puffed up. He thinks it's all about him. Babylon is saying, 'We don't need to follow God's rules. We've got it all together. We've got it figured out. God's law doesn't apply to us,' They're saying "His desires are not upright."

And then, if you'll skip ahead and if you will look at verses six through nineteen, you can read this on your own time, because we don't have time to go into all of it, but what you are going to find is that God, very, very boldly issues five woes to Babylon, basically saying, "I know what they are doing, and I'm going to tell you exactly how I'm going to punish them," and I'll just give you the high points.

1. In verse six, God is speaking to the Babylonians who are thieves, and they are stealing, and He says, "Woe to him who piles up stolen goods. You are going to pay for what you have done."
2. In verse nine, He's talking to the cheaters, or the deceivers, and He says, "Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain. You are going to get what's coming to you."
3. In verse twelve, He's talking to the violent ones, and He says, "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed."
4. In verse fifteen, He's talking to the partiers, yes, the partiers. He says, "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors."
5. And then in verse nineteen, He's talking to the idolaters, those who believe that their meaning is going to come from the things of this world, and He says, "Woe to him who says to wood, or objects, 'Come to life! You're going to fulfill me! You're going satisfy me!'"

God says, "Wait for it because in My time you will see that My punishment is absolutely just. They will get what is coming to them. Wait for it. Wait for it. My word is good, says the Lord.

Let's look at verse four one more time, and we'll pick up the second part of the verse this time.

- **Habakkuk 2:4 HCSB** Look, his ego is inflated; he is without integrity. But the righteous one will live by his faith.

Here's what God says, and this is what many people consider to be the key verse of the book of Habakkuk. Here's what scripture says. God says, "See, Babylon? His ego is what? His ego is...His ego is inflated. He is without integrity."

But there is another group of people that God calls “righteous.” “But the righteous,” how will they live? “The righteous will ...” I want you guys to say that again. How will the righteous live? “The righteous will,” what? “They will live by faith.”

The righteous, those who are Mine, they are going to live, not by what they see, not by what’s going on around them, but instead, the righteous, no matter what is happening, they will live by faith. What will they have faith in? They will absolutely have faith in whatever God has said. They have listened. They will have faith in what they have recorded and believing God has spoken, and they will have faith to wait on God to fulfill His promises, even when life looks like it’s going backwards and down, and even when it doesn’t make sense. And even when everyone else says, “You should forsake God. He’s not coming through for you.” The righteous will not live by what they see, but they will live by faith.

Another way that that can be translated is “the righteous will live FAITHFULLY.” They will keep doing what is right regardless of whether they are applauded or not. As one godly man used to always say

“From the very start, have purpose in your heart to do what's right, and never question why. Never count the cost though everything seems lost. The price for doing right is sometimes high. Do right till the stars fall! Do right till the last call! Do right when there's no else to stand by you. Do right when you're alone. Do right though it's never known. Do right, do right.” – song based on quote by Dr. Bob Jones Sr.

The righteous will live by faith that God will be true to His word. In fact, if you ever want to be built up in your faith, I would encourage you to read the book of Hebrews in the eleventh chapter. It is known as the faith chapter, and it will go through a list again and again of how people live by faith.

So, when God promises you a **child** and you cannot conceive, you believe by faith that God will bring it about. Maybe He will give you a child by birth; maybe He will give you one by adoption, but you continue to believe by faith.

Whatever you are **giving**, and you feel like maybe you don’t have enough money left for the rest of the month, but you are being obedient to God’s word, by faith, you believe that God will be your provider.

Whenever your **marriage** is falling apart, and everyone says, “Well, you might as well go get a divorce,” you’ll say, “No, I remember the vows that we made. By faith, I believe that all things are possible with God.”

Whenever your **kids** are making the wrong decisions and everyone else says, “Oh, man, they’re gonna kill themselves. They’re going to be a mess,” you believe by faith that God is working in their lives to bring about good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

You continue, even when things are going the wrong way, to live by faith. You live by faith. You don’t walk by what you see; but instead, you live by faith.

Now, what happens when (like many of the people in Hebrews 11 you’re living by faith, and in your lifetime, you still don’t see what you believe God promised? There’s three words that you have to remember, and you never let go of these three words. If you want, no matter what, to be growing closer to God, the three words you remember on your journey toward intimacy and ultimate trust and faith will be the words “**but the Lord**”, and you will find these words in verse twenty of Habakkuk chapter two, when Habakkuk says, “Even though I understand, and even though I don’t like it, and even though I don’t really want to believe that this is what’s going to happen, he says, “But the Lord is in His holy temple. The Lord is still in charge. But the Lord, He is good. He is righteous. He is true. But, the Lord is still there. Even though everything else says what I don’t want to hear, “But the Lord is in his holy temple,” and he says, “let all the earth be silent before him.”

Just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who said, “I don’t know. Nebuchadnezzar’s telling me to bow down and worship or he’ll throw me in this fiery furnace. He said we are going to die. I believe God CAN deliver us. I believe God WILL deliver us, but

even if He doesn't, I will not bow down. I will still believe. Why? Because I believe the Lord is in His temple, and because He is still on the throne, I will live by faith."

What do you do when you are in the dip? You listen; you record it, and you keep serving while you wait, living by faith, because the Lord is in His holy temple.