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## WORSHIPING GOD WHEN YOUR WORLD IS SHAKING

### I. Introduction

- A. Universal experience- All believers will have their world shaken at some point. How are we to relate with God during these times?
- B. My experience.
- C. A biblical experience- Habakkuk as a case study.

He moves from “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? (1:2) to “Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vine..., yet I will rejoice in the Lord.” (3:17-18). Transitioning from questioning God to trusting God, Habakkuk models worshiping God when your world is shaking.

### II. Habakkuk’s story

- A. Setting- Habakkuk’s questions
  - 1. Habakkuk is written at a time when God’s people have turned away from him. Israel has reverted from a recent renewal to a current rebellion.
  - 2. The “how long?” question. Habakkuk complains to God because he thinks God is acting too slowly to correct his rebellious people. (1:2-4) He cries out in anguish longing for God to act.
  - 3. The “why?” question. “Why do you idly look at wrong?” (1:3b)
  - 4. His context is different than ours, but his response is familiar. When our world is shaking, these are the questions we often ask of God: “How long?” and “Why?”
- B. God’s answers
  - 1. We usually don’t get answers to our questions, but God answers Habakkuk.
  - 2. God is at work in ways that we cannot see (1:5-6)

3. God is at work in ways that we cannot understand. He is raising up the Chaldeans (1:5-11) to invade and destroy Israel. God owns the nations and he will use whomever he pleases, however he pleases to glorify himself.
4. How is a passage about the Chaldean army relevant for us?
  - a. We too can affirm God is at work when we don't see him at work.
  - b. We too can affirm God is at work when our circumstances don't make sense.
  - c. We too can affirm God is at work when our circumstances are terrible.

C. Habakkuk responds

1. Habakkuk rehearses what he knows to be true of God. (1:12)
  - a. God is everlasting
  - b. God is self-existent
  - c. God is holy
  - d. God is sovereign
  - e. God is faithful

“The more we know of God, the more unreservedly we will trust him; the greater our progress in theology, the simpler and more childlike will be our faith.” Machen

2. Habakkuk continues to voice his concerns to God. (1:13-17)
3. Habakkuk waits on God in faith (2:1)
4. There is a rhythm to lifestyle worship when our world is shaking. Remember what God is like. Express our concerns to him. Wait and watch in faith. Repeat.

D. The heart of the Christian life- “the righteous shall live by his faith.” (2:4)

1. Our conversion comes through faith.
2. Our entire Christian life is lived by faith in God.

“Faith means taking the bare Word of God and acting upon it because it is the Word of God. It means believing what God says simply and solely because He has said it.” Martyn Lloyd-Jones

3. God will sort everything out with the Chaldeans (2:5-20). Habakkuk is called to trust God to fulfill his will in his way and in his time.
- E. Habakkuk looks to his future through the lens of God's faithfulness in the past. (3:1-15)
- F. The conclusion of the matter (3:16-19)
  1. A shaken body (v.16). He trembles as he waits for the day of trouble before him. Serious suffering.
  2. An unshaken heart.
    - a. "I will quietly wait" (v. 16)
    - b. "yet I will rejoice" (v. 18)

What is the "yet"? "Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls" (v. 17)

What is he facing? "disaster on a total scale... the ravages of war, the horrors of invasion, the devastation of nature's resources, the removal of all basic necessities." David Prior

Rejoicing is finding joy again in God alone, not circumstances. Habakkuk is rejoicing in light of total devastation. Virtually every blessing will be removed.

- c. "I will take joy in the God of my salvation" (v. 18). Joy is found in focusing on God's saving power.
- d. "God, the Lord is my strength." (v. 19) He trusts in God alone to enable him to navigate his treacherous path ("he makes me tread on high places).

### III. Our Response

- A. Know that shaking happens to everyone. Just read the Psalms. Realizing the normalcy of disorienting seasons of life is our starting place.
- B. Believe that God is sovereign overall, including our shaking. This bedrock truth is at the heart of Habakkuk. God always acts for his glory and our good.

"Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases." Psalm 115:3

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Romans 8:28-29

“I am afraid that all the grace that I have got of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours, might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable ... Affliction is the best bit of furniture in my house. It is the best book in a minister's library.” Charles Spurgeon

- C. Remember the character of God. He doesn't change with our circumstances. Study God's character.
- D. Rehearse his faithfulness. “God is faithful” can easily become a trite slogan without teeth. Think through specific historical examples of God's faithfulness to you starting with your conversion and thank God.
- E. Face God when facing the unknown. Future uncertainty is part of the human experience. When we envision a future without God, we are tempted to fear. When we envision a future with him, we will trust.
- F. Put your confidence in God and not a desired outcome to your circumstances. Consider Habakkuk's “YET, I will rejoice in the Lord” (3:16).
- G. Draw your comfort and strength from the gospel when your world is shaking.

“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:32

- H. For leaders- a greater challenge lies in this: “Leading others in worshipping God when your world is shaking.” How do we lead others when we are enduring turbulence?
  1. Insure that you are speaking openly with a pastor or fellow leader regarding your struggles. Walk in humility. Ask for assessment. Should you take a break? Continue with a lighter schedule? Press on normally?
  2. Remember you are leading God's people as one of God's people. Your suffering is a platform for greater compassion and connection with those suffering in your church. Many in the gathering are experiencing adversity.

3. Know that in your weakness God's power is revealed.

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

4. Allow your suffering to push you deeper into prayer and the study of God's word. When this happens, you have something much deeper and fresher to offer on Sundays.
5. Consider all that has been said above through the account of Habakkuk. God is not different and certainly no less deserving of your praise when you are suffering.
6. Cultivate a longing for eternity through your afflictions. Suffering is intended to stoke eternal hope in our hearts. Suffering prepares you to lead others into genuine biblical hope.

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:16-18