

# Trusting God for His Future Purpose

*Trusting God in Trying Times*

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**Bible Text:** Habakkuk 2:2-3:2  
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I have a quiz for you as we get started here this morning. I'm going to describe a situation. This is kind of like a true/false quiz. I'll describe a situation and I want you to decide whether what's happening is good or bad. These are real life examples that I am about to give to you that happened in time and space. An innocent man goes to prison after his brother betrays him and he had done nothing wrong. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? You can check your answer. 2. A godly man is destitute and suffering without the necessary food that he needs to survive. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Then thirdly, an innocent man is executed on the basis of false testimony and trumped up charges. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Now, your impulse perhaps at any place other than in this room on this weekend, your impulse would be to say in each example, "That's a bad thing. Brothers shouldn't do that to their sibling. Godly men should not suffer want. Innocent people should not be the recipients of the death penalty." And your impulse in every one of those examples would be wrong. You would be completely mistaken, badly mistaken. The kidnap victim who went to prison after his brother betrayed him was Joseph in the book of Genesis. The Bible says that when his brothers sold him into captivity, God meant it for good and he became the Prime Minister of Egypt and was a source of deliverance to the people of God. When the Apostle Paul suffered want, the godly man who is destitute, he said, "God was perfecting my strength in weakness." The man who was executed on the basis of false testimony? You know, Jesus Christ, crucified for your sins. God was carrying out the plan of salvation in the midst of an unjust trial and, humanly speaking, an unjust execution. Look at this, your initial reaction based on limited information, based on true information but on a very limited perspective, your judgment was wrong in every circumstance. You said, "That's bad," and God said, "That's good." "Paul shouldn't suffer like that." Paul says, "He was perfecting his strength in my weakness." If you had actually had your way like Peter said and said an innocent man should not be executed, you would have evacuated the whole plan of salvation; you would have worked against the eternal purpose of God in Christ. Those are easy examples in one sense.

Here's the thing, beloved, it is just so crucial to you to understand that with limited information, your judgment is unreliable. You do not know what is good or bad in any given situation. You don't know the fullness of the immediate circumstance; you don't know the hidden purpose of God; you don't know what the final outcome of the

circumstance is going to be. So no matter how difficult, no matter what circumstance might come to your mind as you say this, you and I as believers in Christ have to condition ourselves when it comes to life's circumstances to say, "Do you know what? I don't have the full story. My judgment is unreliable." In other words, you have to learn to be someone that is completely different from everyone around you where every man is doing what is right in his own eyes and every person thinks that they know what is best. You don't. Neither do I. We have to learn to trust something else. And what is that something else that we trust more than our own opinion and our own thinking? Well, to grow in trusting God, you must value Scripture over your own thinking. That's the bottom line. That is the bottom line. Scripture is true. It is always right. It is always accurate. Scripture is sufficient for every need of the human heart and sometimes Scripture is going to give you a clarity about something that you would think would be the exact opposite. It was that way with Habakkuk, it was that way when Christ was crucified.

So just to repeat our definition of trust one more time here today, we said that you trust God when you evaluate your problems in light of his ways that he has revealed in his word and then you rest your confidence that he will ultimately deal with you consistently with those ways. You trust God when you rely on Scripture more than you rely on your own opinion. You trust God when you trust his revealed character in the Bible more than you do your own feelings or response to the circumstances that are around you. This is crucial. Everything hinges on that point. If you embrace that point, beloved, if you adopt that as your worldview, you have positioned yourself to walk through life trusting God. Ultimately, it's not that it won't be without its difficulties, but that's the cornerstone. If you haven't come to the point, you know and Jesus said, "If any man wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and come after me." Well, part of that self-denial is saying, "I am not going to trust my own judgment and my own feelings over the revealed truth of Scripture. I trust Scripture more than I trust my own thinking, my own feelings." And when you do that, then you're in a position where you can inform your thinking with Scripture and as we've already seen here in this hour and over the weekend. Beloved, let's just be real direct, shall we, just real candid with one another: there is no meaningful alternative to what we're saying here. You have a choice where you say that, "I'll guide my life by trusting God's word or I won't." And if you abandon God's word, you're left with your own judgment. Don't you see that that is a form of spiritual suicide to do that? Do you see that? That we've already shown in just the simplest of examples that your judgment is not reliable. You don't know the full story so how can you possibly come to settled, final conclusions about what is good in your circumstances or not? You can't. You have no way of knowing and part of trusting God, part of knowing God is the recognition that he knows what is best, he is good, he has my best interest in mind and he always works everything together for good in my life because I belong to his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, if that's true, then you rest in that. You're not even a Christian if you don't believe that, that God is good and Christ has saved you. So everything that we're talking about here with these eight principles from the book of Habakkuk, it's simply an outworking of basic biblical truth. There are no secrets here. There is no hidden knowledge that is born out of my experience that I talked about last night. None of that. This is equally available to the youngest person here who knows Christ as it is to

the most seasoned saint. This is what God gives to all of his children to live their lives by and to trust him.

So we've said that God's ways are not your ways; that his ways are often hidden; that his ways are holy; and they may make you wait. That brings us to new material here for this afternoon. Here's another one that is just simple and undeniable and yet we so quickly forget when remembering would feed our trust in God. Point 5 for our time together this weekend: God's ways are still future. God's ways are still future. What happened as Habakkuk waited in chapter 2, verse 1? What came next? Well, eventually God answered him. Habakkuk said, "I'm going to wait to see how God responds to me," and then in verse 2, that's exactly what God does, the Lord answers him. In verse 2, look at it with me, Habakkuk 2:2, "The LORD answered me and said," and here comes the word of God to the prophet,

2 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. 3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

God is introducing what's going to come next. He is about to give prophetic revelation to Habakkuk that he is to write down and he says, "I want you to write this down so that it will be preserved for future generations. The content of what I'm about to say is still just a little bit further off but wait for it because it is happening according to my word and therefore it is certain in coming to pass." And God speaks to Habakkuk in chapter 2, verse 4, and he lays out in verse 4, a principle for the ages. Look at chapter 2, verse 4,

4 "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

Now, in the immediate context here, God is speaking to the reality of the sinfulness of the Chaldean nation that was being raised up and what he's saying is, he says, "Habakkuk, I'm perfectly aware that they are proud and that their souls are sinful and they are not right." He says, "I recognize that. There will be ultimate consequences to that for them but by contrast for my people, what do they do? They live by their faith. The righteous one lives by his faith." And here's the point: we saw this from Psalm 1, Psalm 1:6 says, why don't you turn there with me for just a moment, Psalm 1:6, because this is an anchor of the whole way that we understand life. Psalm 1:6 says, "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish." God knows who belongs to him. God knows their ways. He is omniscient, we've been looking at that too recently, haven't we? God knows everything about it. God is perfectly powerful and perfectly capable to direct and protect the steps of his people because he knows their way and he is faithful and he won't lose a one of them. He won't lose a one of us who belong to Christ. But by contrast, the way of the wicked, it's doomed to failure; it's doomed to perish; it's doomed to flourish perhaps for a moment but it will fade like the flower of the field under the wilting heat of the day.

So going back to Habakkuk, what God is saying here is, he says, "Habakkuk, be at peace. Settle down. Rest. Be confident. Let your heart settle into this simple principle." God is saying, "I deal with men and nations justly. I deal with people and I deal with leaders, I deal with countries, I deal with them rightly. I know the way of the righteous. I know the way of the wicked." And it pleases God for a time in many cases to let righteous people suffer in order to purify their faith. It pleases God for his purposes for a time to let wicked people prosper in order to accomplish his ends. In the midst of those temporary situations, this passage teaches us, don't lose sight of the overarching sovereignty of God, the overarching power and righteousness of God to balance all of the accounts in the end; to make everything just when it is all settled and done. God will do right, beloved. God will punish godless sinful people and he will reward those who belong to him. That is a foundational operative principle of the moral universe that can never be violated. God will do right. Period. Say it simply and let the simplicity of the thought echo into your mind and take deep root into your thinking. God will do right and God is sovereign over all.

So what does that mean for you in the midst of people misrepresenting you? Lying to you? Mistreating you? What does it mean for your past where you were taken advantage of and even abused and you say, "This was all wrong and this wasn't right and I just can't get over it"? How does this inform those long time chronic issues in your life and thinking and in your feelings about things? Beloved, remember that God knows the way of the righteous but the way of the wicked will perish. God will do right. Application. Everybody likes application in sermons. Application. What does that mean for you? Here it is: let God be God and trust him. Let God be God and trust him. You don't have to take vengeance into your own hands. You don't have to live in bitterness and regret and hostility settled deep into your heart. If you have been wronged, God will take care of it in time. Chances are that if you have been wronged, that there's probably, you know, it's not that you were perfectly blameless in it yourself. I think about that so often in the midst of things that I look back on in my life. You know, the more I look back on things that I thought were wrongs done to me at the time, the more I see the whole problem was me: the way I reacted, the way I responded, what I did, the bad feelings I let come to root in my own heart. And all of that is answered by the simple concept: let God be God and trust him and leave it there because the righteous will live by his faith.

Now, in multiple places, the New Testament quotes Habakkuk 2:4. Romans 1:17, the cornerstone of Paul's Gospel is built on this verse as the New Testament quotes this verse to affirm the principle of justification by faith, that is, that we obtain a right standing before God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that we become reconciled to God by trusting in the righteousness and the shed blood of someone else, not in our own being. We don't trust in our own merit. We trust in something outside of us. We trust in Christ and what we see, the New Testament also quotes it to talk about sanctification. What we see here is that faith is the operative principle in spiritual life. Hebrews says we walk by faith, not by sight.

So what is this saying to you, Habakkuk 2:4? What is it saying to the prophet as he contemplates these coming world events that will change life as he knows it? Beloved,

trusting God is the operative principle in life. Knowing and trusting God is the operative principle of the Christian life. That is what we do as Christians. That's why God saved us, was to know him and to trust him as we walk through this life, ultimately to deliver us safe into heaven. That's the reason that you exist is to know God and to trust him. Look at what it says there, chapter 2, verse 4, "the righteous will live by his faith. " So the believer trusts God – watch this – as his pattern of life. As new waves of joys and blessings and trials and struggles come upon the shore of your life, the ocean comes in and the ocean goes out, new things come in to concern you and then recede and other things come back to replace them, through all of that, you are not to be tossed about on the foam of those waves and just tossed about with every change that comes about. No, going back to the lighthouse example, you are to be a solid pillar as those waves pound upon you and you can be that solid pillar because of who God is and by trusting him in the way that we're talking about here. One of those aspects of trust central to it all is that you trust God for his future purposes. God's ways are still future.

Now, let's kind of walk through a little bit of Habakkuk 2 and just apply what's in this for ourselves here. We won't go through verse by verse Habakkuk 2, let me just give you a little description of what's going on here. God in Habakkuk 2, remember the context here: Habakkuk said at the end of chapter 1, verse 17, look at it with me. Habakkuk 1:17, Habakkuk said, "God, are they going to continually slay nations without sparing? You are blessing them, God. By your own admission, you are strengthening them. They are an instrument in your hand. They are gaining power and they are ruthless and they're always victorious. Is this going to go on forever?" And here in chapter 2, God untangles the dilemma that Habakkuk was wrestling with. How can God use – here it is – how can God use a wicked nation to accomplish his purposes? God addresses that matter now. How can it be that God allows wicked things to happen in your life, wicked people to wrong and harm you? How can that be consistent with his holiness? Well, God answers that for Habakkuk and basically what he says here in chapter 2 is this, he says, "I am aware of their violence. Of course I am. I know everything. I'm God." God speaking, of course, and what God says is, "I'm aware of their violent nature and, Habakkuk, I have set limits on it. Sure, this is going to unfold for a period of time but when I'm satisfied that this has come to its conclusion, I'm going to put a stop to it. Just trust me to do right in the future even while it seems to be distorted in the present."

You can see this, God pronounces a series of woes against the Chaldeans in Habakkuk 2. We'll just look at them. There are five of them and we're just going to bounce on them real quickly. Chapter 2, verse 6, remembering all of the context here. God is now pronouncing doom upon these people who are prospering at the present time in Habakkuk's day. Chapter 2, verse 6, actually, let's go to verse 5. Speaking about the proud one, addressing the Chaldeans in their wickedness, God says, chapter 2, verse 5,

5 "Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples.

He says, "These are wicked people who are prospering and their prosperity is going to extend and continue." But look at what he says in verse 6, he says,

6 "Will not all of these [all of this prosperity gained by violence, he says, will it not] take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him And say, 'Woe to him who increases what is not his - For how long - And makes himself rich with loans?'

Now remember, God has said the way of the wicked will perish. These Chaldeans were extending their prosperity by wicked gain, by ruthless violence. The seeds of their own destruction were embedded in their own success and God says, "They are like somebody who is making themselves rich with loans. Sooner or later the bank calls the loan and payment has to be made," and he says, "This nation is like that before me. They are sinful. They are violent. I get it. There will be a time of accounting for them that comes in the more distant future and that won't go well with them." He pronounces woe and judgment upon them.

Verse 9, he says,

9 "Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the hand of calamity!

Verse 12,

12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence!

Verse 15,

15 "Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!

Verse 19,

19 "Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, 'Awake!' To a mute stone, 'Arise!' And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.

So the living God, let me just kind of summarize this for you, the living God is pronouncing judgment upon this nation that will come in the more distant future. He says "They are violent, they are idolaters. I get it. I'm not going to allow it to go on forever. I'll allow it for a time to accomplish my purpose but after that there is going to be an accounting. There will be judgment to pay. Everything that they've done in the wickedness of their heart, in the sinful way that they have afflicted nations, I'm going to call them to account and they'll give an account and when I do, there will be judgment upon them."

So, stepping back, what God is saying to Habakkuk is this: he has not abandoned his firm and fair rule. God has not abandoned his sovereignty as this nation rises up. It's really not that difficult. The wicked prosper for a time to accomplish purposes that God uses them for but eventually certainly when it's all said and done, God punishes the godless and rewards the righteous. In this instance with the Babylonians, they reigned over that region for about 70 years and then the Persians rose up and conquered them. Their prosperity didn't even last for the lifetime of a man. That's how God dealt with them.

So here in chapter 2, God is giving Habakkuk a preview of world history. He's saying, "This is what's going to happen." In other words he's saying, "There is more to come in the future that will round out this story, Habakkuk, and when that happens, you will find that I have exercised precision justice on everyone wicked," because that's what God does. He punishes the godless and he rewards the righteous. God is sovereign. God is holy. And in the midst of those times where it seems like wickedness is prevailing, in our country it's on the ascendancy, isn't it? It's already there but do you know what? We don't have to look at what's happening in the news headlines and the prosperity and the success of perversion in our world right now as if that were suddenly a permanent change and condition. God's going to deal with that eventually. People don't get away with sin, lies and wickedness. They don't. And God will deal with them in his way and in his timetable.

For Habakkuk in this context of chapter 2, for us in our present day situation, it's simple. It really is simple: God is sovereign and he is holy and therefore Habakkuk 2, "Habakkuk, you can trust him." For us in our day, same God, same eternal character, different manifestation of wickedness but same response from the people of God. "God, you are sovereign. God, you are holy. I trust you completely." No exceptions. That's the response. That's what faith looks like. Because God is sovereign and holy, you can trust him. In the midst of your sorrows of life, the seeming injustices, the frustrations big and small, in the midst of them all, you can trust him. You must trust him. Why would you not? On what grounds, okay, let's approach it from a negative sense, in light of everything that we've said in the past 18 hours, in light of everything that we've said, why would you not, on what ground would you dismiss God's character and say, "Do you know what? I'm not going to trust that." On what righteous ground would you come to a position like that in your heart? This forces you, it compels you, it corrals you into a place of trust. "Of course, God, I trust you. What else would I do? How else could I be?"

Now, embedded here in chapter 2 and these were things that really sobered me up, I guess you could say, in the midst of some of the discouragement that I felt that I described last night. Habakkuk 2:14 and Habakkuk 2:20, God says in verse 14 that "the earth will be filled," notice the future tense translation, "the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea." Do you know what? That verse is still future to us. In the intervening 2,600 years since the time of Habakkuk, there hasn't been a time like this where the whole earth was filled with the knowledge and the glory of the Lord. This is referring to the time when Christ will reign on earth during his millennial reign and Christ is established as the eternal Son of God reigning over all the earth and all the earth will look to it's one Ruler and see the glory of God on display

in the person of Christ. It will fill the earth in a way that is still future to us. Beloved, beloved, if that time is coming when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord is a universal phenomenon that everyone must recognize, can't you wait just a little bit longer in the midst of your suffering to say, "Okay, it's going to be all right. I'll trust God for that coming future time that still lies ahead."

Then look at verse 20 and this...well, let's just look at verse 20. God sums all of this up. This is the final word from God in the course of the dialogue with Habakkuk. Chapter 3 is a prayer from Habakkuk, an inspired prayer, to be sure, but this is the end of the Lord's dialogue to Habakkuk. Let's kind of sum up what we've said. God has spoken to Habakkuk and he says, "Habakkuk, my ways are hidden from your eyes. I'm holy. I'm eternal. I'm still on my throne and I'm going to judge things in the future." Everlasting God from age to age the same, that's who God is, all right? And now having displayed all of that, having put all of that on the table and displayed it to his prophet, he calls for a response from Habakkuk and from all the earth in chapter 2, verse 20.

Look at it there with me. It says, "But," Yahweh, "the LORD," the covenant keeping faithful God, that God, that Lord, "is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him." Wouldn't it be wonderful, can you imagine if we just experienced this for like an hour in our present world? If everything about the media shut down, if all the false teachers were silenced, if social media went dark and there were no people posting and everything was just silent and there was just a universal contemplation of the glory and majesty of God for just an hour. I'd pay for that, wouldn't you? Habakkuk here is hearing God say this, "Habakkuk, I've said all that I need to say. I am who I am. I sovereignly reign over all. I am in my holy temple where man cannot assail me, where nothing can compromise my sovereignty. I rule over it all in perfect majestic glory. That's who I am and that's what I do." What do you say in response to that? Do you know what you say? Nothing. In the midst of all of Habakkuk's agitations, in the midst of the agitations of your soul and mine, there comes a point where the most righteous holy thing that you can do is to take your hand and put it over your mouth and stop talking. Stop questioning. Stop asking, "But what about this or that or this or that?" Stop. God, sovereign, holy, majestic God, reigns. Stop and be silent and contemplate that for a good long time. That's what trust does. You see, when you're exposed in your mind to the absolute eternal nature of God, you should draw back and say, "If he's like that, then I need to speak less and listen more. I need to humble myself under that majestic God and simply quietly rest and trust in him and acknowledge him for who he is."

God says to Habakkuk, "Habakkuk, look beyond this life. Look beyond the circumstances. Consider the eternal and the absolute." Brother and sister in Christ as you sit here today, having gone through your different circumstances of life and the things that agitate you, brother and sister in Christ, those with whom I will spend all of eternity together and can't wait to share that with you around the throne of Christ, look beyond your present life. Look beyond the circumstances. Look beyond the relationships, the finances, all of that. Look beyond it all. Do what Christians do. Do what people of faith do. Look beyond it all. Transcend all of the circumstances and peer, as it were, into the holy temple of God where he reigns in absolute majesty and holiness and like the prophet



Isaiah, tremble. "Woe is me! I'm undone! I've seen the Lord!" He has plans for the future. He is who he is. You say to yourself, "Who am I to quiver in doubt and question in light of that truth?" So my act of worship becomes one hand on two lips and I just humble and silence myself before him. That's what trust does. Trust bows before God and worships.

Christian, we'll say it again from another perspective. Do you know the outcome of all of your problems? Look at 1 John 3:2. God's plans are still future. The story isn't over. We don't know the outcome of all of these things and so let's humble ourselves enough to silence our speculations. 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God," we already belong to him, we're in his family, "it has not appeared as yet what we will be," future tense. "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." Your mouth and mine is eager, your tongue is eager to speak foolishly under the provocation of adverse circumstances; to act and to speak as though you know more than you do and that God is somewhat less than what he is. Recognize that wicked streak in your tongue and in your heart and say, "I'm not going to give voice to it." God is in his holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before him. Christian friend, the Lord is in his holy temple with good plans for his children and you're one of them. You will be in heaven with Christ. Christian friend, nothing else is going to matter then. I say it gently, in light of that, what do you have to complain about?

You know, tying it to what I said last night, I had to come to the point where I had to recognize, do you know what? Whatever became of my dad and brother, whatever becomes of the loved ones that we have that die without Christ, whatever happens with that, there is something surpassing that changes our whole perspective on it. I don't understand how when we are in heaven God will make all of that all right; that God will wipe every tear from our eyes; and that there will be perfection and there will be no sense that anyone or anything is missing. If something was missing, it would be less than perfect. That can't be the way that God has designed eternity forever from his matchless holy temple. That can't be, can it? Can it? That can't be and so somehow in the future the hole that I have in my heart and the lack of knowledge that I have on things like that now, God is going to make it, God is going to settle it in the future in a way that will leave no doubt about his righteousness and goodness. No doubt. That has to be. That's how God deals with us. And if that's true, if God's ways are still future in that manner, then what does that mean for me? It means I can wait. I can wait to see how this plays out and I'll just trust my God completely to say whatever comes of that, whatever you do in the future, whenever I see Christ face-to-face, I know that whoever believes in him will not be disappointed and that's your hope in your future realm. God's ways are still future and you trust him for that.

Now, that's kind of hinted at the sixth point, the sixth and final point for this morning. It just gets more wonderful the deeper you go into the book of Habakkuk. Point 6: God's ways call for complete submission. To make it second person plural, God's ways call for your complete submission. Your complete submission. Go back to Habakkuk 3 now. God has just declared himself in holy majesty. He says, "the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the," world, "all the earth be silent before Him." And now in chapter 3, Habakkuk responds to that.

Slight tangent. Slight tangent to help you here that I think this is pastorally important. Beloved, to work through these things in your mind and heart takes some time. It's not simply a matter of just hearing, you know, three, six-hour sermons, 18 hours total, it's not a matter of just hearing the sermon and walking out and it's all settled and you never have any questions. It doesn't work that way. God gives us these truths, God exposes these things, these principles in his word and then we have to go and we have to work through it. You have to work through those rebel thoughts that would rise up against it. You have to go through it repeatedly over and over again. You rehearse these things in your mind until they take deep root. It's not a simple matter of saying, "Okay, I heard this and now it's settled for all time." You have to pick up and read and take and apply.

Chapter 3, verse 1, point 6: God's ways call for complete submission. Here's where Habakkuk is at with what he's about to say: he understands that the judgment is certain; he knows that the nation will undergo suffering at the hands of wicked people who have their destruction in mind. Look at how he prays, chapter 3, verses 1 and 2.

1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth [some kind of poetic form].

Verse 2 is his prayer,

2 LORD [Yahweh, covenant keeping, faithful God], I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years [in the midst of the years, you see he's focused on the future.] In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy.

In wrath remember mercy. Let's just think about this for a minute. Habakkuk has received a great vision from God. He has engaged in a masterpiece dialogue with the living God as the prophet of God and eternal themes of the holiness and sovereignty of God have been woven throughout them and Habakkuk has seen that his prior thinking was misguided and now he changes and adapts to it. He's aware, beloved. Put yourself in Habakkuk's shoes. He is aware as he prays this that life as he has known it is going to come to an end. Their independence as a nation is going to be sacrificed to the conquerors who are about to come upon them and I want you to see the contrast between this prayer in chapter 3 and his prayer in Habakkuk 1. How did he start out? He started out and he's agitated, "God, I cry out violence and why do you not save?" God shows him what's going on and in chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, what is he doing here? He is not protesting. Do you see that? Do you get that? Can you apply that in your own life in circumstances that cannot change in your own life? He's no longer protesting, he accepts it. The truth of the matter is that the national situation is worse than he realized. They're going to be judged. There is no revival ahead in Habakkuk's lifetime. Judgment is coming. Life as he knows it is going to end and what does the revelation of God drive him to? What does trust look like in times like that? Mark it, beloved, he's not complaining. He's not asking God to change anything. He simply submits to God's plan despite the consequences it will bring for him and his nation.

Look at what he says there in verse 2, he says, "O LORD, I've heard the report." I understand. I know it's going on now. "LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years." In other words, "In those years when judgment comes, renew your work in the covenant people so that we will not die. Show grace in the midst of your judgment. Complete your work in the covenant nation." He says, "When the judgment is severe, when they are really in the midst of us and they're conquering us and they're killing us, God, revive the work then that you've done throughout the centuries. You raised us up from Abraham. You multiplied us in Egypt. You took us through the Red Sea. You helped us conquer the Promised Land in the book of Joshua. Lord, when a similar kind of calamity comes upon us and war comes upon us, God, just be faithful to us then. The work that you've been doing for centuries, add some coals to the fire so that it doesn't go out. Show that you're not through with us."

And look at that final clause there at the end of verse 2 with me, if you would, he says, "In wrath remember mercy." In wrath remember mercy. How many times have you read through that in your Bible reading plan and you just blew right past it? What is he saying here? This is one of the most amazing prayers in all of the Bible. I would put it up against any prayer prayed by man in Scripture for its depth and significance in this context. A ruthless nation is about to sweep through his homeland and what does he say? He doesn't ask for God to change his mind. He doesn't ask that they could avoid what is about to come. Beloved, he accepts it. Mark it. He accepts it. This is a major turning point. He's not complaining anymore. He's not even talking about the circumstances. He just says, "God, as your wrath is manifested rightly upon us, as that is happening, God, I ask one thing from you, I ask that you would simply remember in the midst of that that you are a merciful God to your people." Unbelievable prayer. Incredible what this means. He says, "God, you're going to do what you do and I accept it. As you're doing it, I just ask you to remember who you are. As you're showing wrath, remember at the same time to show just a little bit of mercy to us as well and I'll be content." This is a major turning point. He commends himself completely to the character of God. "God, one thing that I want from you, the only thing I ask, just remember who you are. Deal with us according to what your character is and I'll be content."

Christian friend, do you see that embedded in that prayer is everything necessary for you to trust God? That there comes a point where your preeminent priority and prayer is not about your circumstances but just a preeminent preoccupation with the character of God. "God, be who you are. Deal with me according to your eternal attributes. That's all I want." How does that manifest in circumstances? "God, I really don't care. Just be God to me. Just be holy. Just deal with me according to your grace and love and all will be well. And as life unfolds, Father, in your perfect providence, your perfect control over all of my circumstances, God, I trust you that those circumstances will somehow be a manifestation of your goodness and grace in my life and that's all I want." This is complete, utter submission. This is a complete subordination to the character of God.

So, beloved, I'm wrapping up now. In the midst of your trials that cannot change, in the midst of those chronic things that have just brought you discouragement and you have

been borne under the weight of them for so long, what do you do? What does trusting God look like? It looks like this: you submit to Christ. You commend yourself completely and wholly to him without qualification, without preconditions. And why do you do that? It's because you value Christ more than you value life itself. "Christ, be God to me more than anything else and I make no stipulations on it. I accept what you bring." In spirit you're praying in the way that the Lord taught us all to pray in Matthew 6:10, you know it, right? "Father, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Father, your will be done in my life as it is in heaven. Father, does that mean that my loved ones have gone before me without Christ? Does that mean that some of my loved ones might not reconcile with me in this lifetime? God, you are holy. You are good. You are gracious. O God, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven because, God, if your will is done, then everything will be well because of who you are. God, have your way with me and I will be content."

Let's bow together in prayer.

*Father, help us to yield our lives to you in such a way that we would manifest this kind of unconditional trust in the goodness of our God. Amen.*

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