

The Importance of Praising God During Difficult Times

Lesson 3 of the series: "Habakkuk: When Trusting God Seems Impossible"

I. Habakkuk started a conversation with God by complaining about how bad things were and that God wasn't doing anything about it.

Habakkuk's 1st complaint: Why don't you do something about all the problems and evil going on?

God's 1st reply: I am doing something, but you're not going to believe it or like it. I am sending the Babylonians to punish your people.

Habakkuk's 2nd complaint: Why would you allow the Babylonians to punish us? They're worse than we are!

God's 2nd reply: You need to live by faith and trust me. I will punish the Babylonians and restore my people when the time is right. Everything will happen just as I said, wait for it.

II. By the end of their conversation, Habakkuk was singing God's praises.

A. Hearing from God changed Habakkuk's perspective.

"This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk: I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works." Habakkuk 3:1 (NLT)

"You asked, 'Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorance?' It is I—and I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me." Job 42:3 (NLT)

Life Application: If we meditate on God's Word every day, He will change our perspective, too!

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."

2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

B. Instead of complaining, Habakkuk asked God for help and mercy.

"In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy." Habakkuk 3:2 (NLT)

Life Application: When facing difficult times, we need to ask God for help and mercy.

"The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He does not punish us for all our sins; he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust." Psalm 103:8-14 (NLT)

C. Habakkuk was willing to wait on God's timing when he remembered God's faithfulness in the past.

"You went out to rescue your chosen people, to save your anointed ones... With his own weapons, you destroyed the chief of those who rushed out like a whirlwind, thinking Israel would be easy prey. You trampled the sea with your horses, and the mighty waters piled high. I trembled inside when I heard this; my lips quivered with fear. My legs gave way beneath me, and I shook in terror. I will wait quietly for the coming day when disaster will strike the people who invade us." Habakkuk 3:13-16 (NLT)

Life Application: We'll find it much easier to wait on the Lord if we remember His faithfulness in the past.

"Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me? Is his unfailing love gone forever? Have his promises permanently failed? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he slammed the door on his compassion? ...But then I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works."

Psalm 77:7-12 (NLT)

D. Habakkuk chose to praise God in spite of the difficult times he knew were coming.

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights."

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NLT)

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” Job 13:15 (NKJV)

Life Application: We need to praise God, especially when we face difficult times.

“Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.” Hebrews 13:15 (NLT)

- Praise strengthens our confidence in God. “His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise. His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden... When he stops, the earth shakes. When he looks, the nations tremble... He is the Eternal One!” Habakkuk 3:3-6 (NLT)
- Praise brings us peace. “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)
- Praise brings us joy and hope. “I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Look over the following characteristics of God. If these are all true (and they are), why do you think we often struggle with trusting God and praising Him during difficult times?
 - God is all-powerful; there is nothing He cannot do. (Job 42:2, Jeremiah 32:27, Luke 1:37)
 - God is all-knowing; there is no problem He cannot solve. (Psalm 139:1-3, 147:5; Isaiah 46:9-10)
 - God is everywhere; there is no place He cannot be found. (Proverbs 15:3, 139:5-10; Isaiah 66:1)
 - God is eternal; He guides the future as well as the past. (Psalm 90:1-4, 106:1; Revelation 1:8, 22:13)
 - God is the creator of everything; He understands how all things work. (Gen. 1:1, Col. 1:15-17)
 - God is unchanging; He can always be counted on. (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:17)
 - God is love; His love for us is outrageous. (Psalm 103:11, Psalm 136, John 3:16, 1 John 4:7-10)
 - God is good; He is for us. (1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 100:5, 145:9; Nahum 1:7)
2. Read Habakkuk 3:2, Psalm 25:6, & Psalm 103:8-12. How have you experienced God’s mercy in your life?
3. Discuss the following benefits to praising God. Which of these have you experienced?
 - Praise brings us peace. (Isaiah 26:3)
 - Praise strengthens our confidence in God. (Habakkuk 3:3-6)
 - Praise brings us joy and hope. (Romans 15:13)

How good are you at praising God during difficult times?

4. Read Habakkuk 3:17-19, Job 13:15, & Acts 27:21-26. What did Job, Habakkuk, and Paul have in common? How do we get faith like that?
5. Read Habakkuk 3:13-16 & Psalm 77:7-12. As a group, list as many Bible stories as you can that tell of God coming through for his people during difficult times. How/why would remembering these stories help us face our problems today?
6. Discuss the following quotations:

“There is something special about people who praise. They have a bright light in their eyes that reflects something beyond themselves. People of praise are people of faith. Their very lives state to the world that they trust their loving heavenly Father, know He intends goodness for His children, and expect extravagant answers to prayer.” Linda Schubert

“Isn’t it a comfort to worship a God we cannot exaggerate?” Francis Chan

“...just as your body needs sleep, your soul needs time to rest in God. To learn more about Him. To talk to Him. To worship and praise Him.” Craig Groeschel