

How Long?

(Trumpets Tears And Ashes, Message 1)

(Lent, 2018)

Habakkuk 1:1-4

A. Habakkuk is a book of tears (lament), ashes (repentance) and trumpets (praise)

B. We'll soon discover how relevant Habakkuk is - even today

THE MAN

A. Habakkuk is a prophet, just not your typical prophet

1. Prophets are deeply committed; they need to be with the abuse they get
2. They are often called to point out the nature and extent of people's sin
3. Habakkuk, however, actually seems to function more like a priest

B. Habakkuk lived in the latter half of the seventh century before Christ

1. The Southern Kingdom wasn't behaving like people of God should
2. A new military power, Babylon, was growing more ominous in the east
 - a. They would eventually take Jerusalem and destroy the temple
 - b. They would take every able-bodied woman and man into slavery

THE MANUSCRIPT

A. Habakkuk is a strange book; it contains no word from God to Israel

1. So Habakkuk is more of a prayer than a prophecy
2. Lament is the heartfelt sense of sadness and grief verbalized in crying, mourning, weeping, or complaining

B. Habakkuk describes dark uncertain times when God seemed absent

C. Habakkuk wants God's assurance that things will work out

THE MOANING (LAMENT) (1:2-4)

A. Habakkuk accuses God of totally ignoring the plight of the helpless

1. People "lamented" in the sanctuary in the presence of God
2. Deep down they believed God was good and just, that he cared for them, and intended to help them

B. Habakkuk expresses his anger toward God

1. First, Habakkuk complains about the evil and debauchery in the world

- a. He complains about the evil and debauchery among God's people
- b. He complains that God seems to be indifferent to this wickedness
- c. One evidence that we are becoming a Biblical people is that we begin to burn as we see evil taking its toll in our world

2. Second, Habakkuk is frustrated that God has been ignoring him

- a. Where are you God? You haven't helped! You don't seem to care! How long will you ignore our pleadings?
- b. What is the problem? I've done all the right things! Why are you letting these things happen?

C. How do we live by faith when your presence seems to be missing?

1. Lord, we desperately need your rule
2. Habakkuk's language suggests he has been pleading with God a long time

THE MESSAGE

A. In the midst of instability, it's natural to turn to God with our questions

B. God's focus is always on the big picture - we see only in fractions

1. Our uncertainty about the future provides the opportunity to live by faith
2. We need to increase our trust in God while we wait for him

C. We come to the Table burning about the injustice in our world

1. We are it's participants and it's victims
2. We come hurting, empty, frustrated, and with all kinds of questions
3. It's a vivid and visual reminder that he's here
4. In answer to our questions, he's given us the only answer we need - himself