

When?

(Trumpets Tears And Ashes, Message 3)
(Lent, 2018)
Habakkuk 2:1-5

A. The inconsistency - between what we've learned and what we experience - brings heartache and questions

1. The first question on Habakkuk's mind was "How long?"
2. The second question Habakkuk longs for an answer to is "Why?"
3. How his question is "*When are you going to make things right?*"

THE DILEMMA

A. The things we believe about God and the nature of evil bring up a dilemma

1. We believe God is omnipotent. How do things happen outside of his will?
2. We believe God loves his creatures and deals lovingly and rightly with us; why doesn't God help us?
3. We believe evil is real so the continuing existence of evil is problematic

B. Habakkuk 2 invites us to take God's justice and mercy seriously

1. We're to be persistent, refuse to give up, or compromise God's Truths
2. Habakkuk stands in the watchtower looking for the salvation God will bring
3. This is an invitation to join Habakkuk in the search and pursuit of Truth

THE DIALOGUE

A. First, note the importance given to what God says (2:2)

B. Second, God wants everyone to know that he can be trusted (2:3)

1. The things God has promised Israel and Habakkuk will happen! Guaranteed!
2. The only variable is "when." "*Don't expect it instantly, or even tomorrow*"

"He has made everything beautiful in it's time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

C. Third, God reminds Habakkuk the unrighteous will be judged (2:3)

D. Fourth, God reminds Habakkuk the righteous will not be abandoned (2:4)

THE DILIGENCE

A. Habakkuk 2:2-5 is God's answer to Habakkuk's question "When?"

1. God's answer seems to contradict itself: "*Though it linger, wait for it, it will certainly come and will not delay.*"

2. This is God's way of assuring us there is an answer and he will give it; but the "when" is his to decide

3. Since only God knows...and that's where faith comes in

B. God: "*The righteous person will live by his faithfulness*" (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)

1. In the Hebrew, it is just three words: righteous, faithfulness, and live

- a. The righteous is one whom God has declared to be vindicated or right
- b. For the Hebrew, to live, is more than just breathing; it's a sense of vitality
- c. Faith and faithfulness are two sides of a coin, meaning "*to be steadfast*"

2. Bible doesn't allow us to separate what one believes (faith) from how one behaves (faithfulness)

C. So how does this answer Habakkuk's complaint and question, "When?!"

1. The contrasts in 2:4-5 divide those who believe in him from those who don't

- a. The righteous are those who remain faithful to God precisely when believing in God makes no logical sense
- b. If we have faith in God and are faithful to him, we'll be justified by the life he gives

2. It can't be thought out, it has to be lived out; it can only be lived out if it's believed

D. Again and again, we find believers who persevere without earthly reward

1. People do it in their marriages; one spouse keeps covenant, the other doesn't
2. It happens in families; parents prioritizing their child's need over their own
3. It happens when people get are diagnosed with a chronic illness
4. It happens when believers are persecuted, and not only survive, they thrive
5. We could put the doubters and questioners here along with Habakkuk
6. It happens in the local church. In difficult times, many stay and are blessed

E. We long for clear explanations, well-thought logic, and comfortable answers

1. While God doesn't always provide clarity; he always offers comfort in his Son
2. But his response to our "When" is to learn to live - not by sight and solutions - but by faith alone