

Questioning God

Week2:

Text: Habakkuk 1:5-11

Introduction

In last week's text (Habakkuk 1:1-4), Habakkuk wanted to know how God, who was known for his justice and goodness, could allow injustice to go unchecked, and why he would continue to allow evil to multiply, without doing anything to stop it. In today's text, where God answers Habakkuk, we see that Habakkuk hated God's response, because it was not what he had hoped for or expected. We should be prepared for a similar reaction.

What is really important for us to grasp from this segment in Scripture is that God's Word often collides with what our culture feels is fitting or right. When it does so, we tend to want to leave out those parts, and classify them as "irrelevant for today", so that we can hold onto our current views and expectations.

We need to be aware of the following 3 truths as we tackle this week's text:

- The truth of Scripture is transcendent; the "truths" of culture are not.
- The Scriptures stay true over time; culture changes truth with time.
- The Scriptures deliver on what they promise; culture fails to deliver.

1. We Should Anticipate That God's Answers Will Astound Us

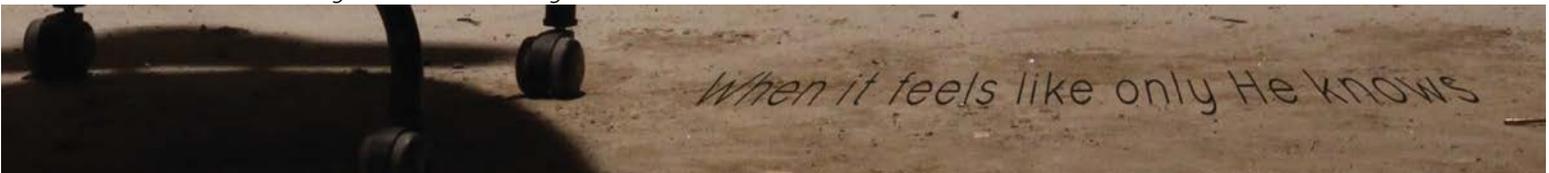
- Read Habakkuk 1:5, Job 26:14 & Isaiah 55:8-9

God's ways are not ours and we should not expect them to be. Scripture teaches us this over and over again. God is omniscient, which means that he knows and sees everything. He can see into people's hearts and into the future. As created beings, the only fitting posture for us towards God is one of trust and humility, knowing that when we don't understand, God in fact does.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think most of our fights come from our inability to see into others people's thoughts and emotions?
- ❖ Q: Why do we struggle so much as a result of not having full understanding of what we see and experience, and why is this particularly difficult when we are facing trying circumstances?
- ❖ Q: Why it is necessary for us to have a posture of humility and trust towards God, who is omniscient?
- ❖ Q: Have you ever sensed God speaking to you about something, whether in the Word, a sermon or in some other way, that made no sense to you at the time? What was your response then, and how might you respond differently today, with this message in mind?

2. We Should Acknowledge Our Assumptions About How God Can and Cannot Operate

- Read Habakkuk 1:6-11
God's answer to Habakkuk's question makes no sense to him at all because it does not line up with what he feels is a good and just response. We tend to react in the same way when God does things we do not agree with.



When it feels like only He knows

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In times like these, we tend to make two incorrect assumptions about the way a good and just God can and cannot work:

- i. God cannot be both good and in control, with all of the evil we see in the world – this is a standard response when we are confronted with evil. The problem is that we use our own lenses and human interpretation of what is good and just, and we cannot see how God could be acting with goodness and justice in the very situation we call evil. In this passage, we see that God was going to do something completely out-of-the-box in order to bring about justice. Just because Habakkuk could not understand it, and just because we can't understand some of the things we see and experience, does not mean that our assumptions about God are right.
 - ii. God cannot be love and a judge at the same time – this assumption is based, not on truth, but on the sentimental emotions we have attached to the word “love”. True love is not something that changes over time, nor is it dependent on fluctuating feelings. Instead, true love is powerful, purposeful and protective, and seeks the best for its beloved. God's love for us includes his discipline when we are walking on paths that are destructive to us in any way. Love and compliance are not the same thing. If God were indifferent towards our evil, he would not have our best interests at heart at all. His justice is an indication of his love.
- ❖ Q: Which of the above two assumptions are you more prone to making, and why?
 - ❖ Q: How do you react to difficult circumstances that you cannot understand?
 - ❖ Q: In what way have you experienced God's discipline or justice, that you later realized was for your good and not some sort of unnecessary punishment?
 - ❖ Q: How would you help someone to confront these two incorrect assumptions about God in a loving manner?

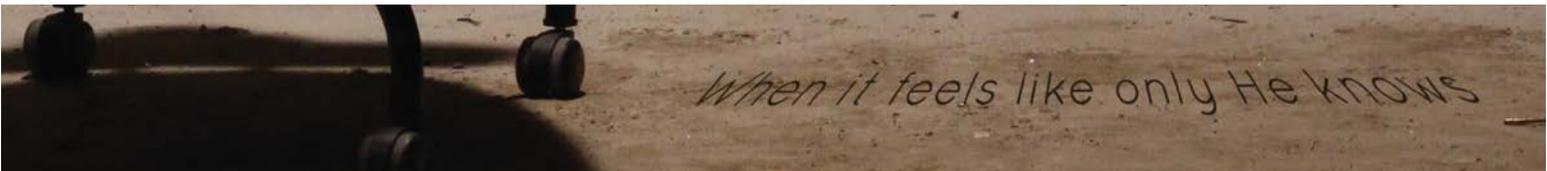
3. We Are Recipients of The Mysterious Combination of God's Judgment and God's Love, His Sovereign Rule and The Existence of Suffering

We will probably never fully understand how all of these things can coexist at the same time. One way we do get to see this, is by looking at the cross. The fact that the cross, as a means to publically humiliate and execute prisoners, was even invented, is hard enough to comprehend in our day, but then the realisation that God knew that it would be used to kill his Son, is at a whole other level of incomprehension. But the knowledge that it was part of God's plan to save and redeem us, brings to light a wonder and sense of awe and humility in us. Had we been there at the time, watching Jesus being crucified, we too would have despaired and questioned God. But we know from the resurrection that God allowed triumph arise out of the tragedy in the most remarkable way.

- ❖ Q: Why is the story of the cross helpful in producing faith in us during those times when it feels as though everything is falling apart, and that evil is prevailing?

Concluding Question:

- ❖ Q: What is the one take-away that God is asking you to deal with this week from this message?



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