

Questioning God

Week 3: The Limitations of Creatureliness

Text: Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

Introduction

Last week, we saw how Habakkuk was unable to solve the tension in his understanding of God's ways. In his mind, his ways and his character did not match up. His conclusion was based on a limited human perspective, one in which we very often find ourselves. We struggle to hold on to the mystery of God's simultaneous goodness and sovereignty, and very often we give up trying and become defeated in our belief. This book is incredibly helpful in addressing us in that space of disillusionment, as we see how God interacts with Habakkuk. As the story unfolds, we see that, instead of just ignoring Habakkuk's questions, God answers and invites Habakkuk to press in and find to out more. And so he does and he changes as a result.

1. Questioning God Is Surprisingly Dangerous

God does not rebuke Habakkuk for asking hard questions. But nor does he bow down to his wants and desires. His answer is totally unexpected. We cannot force God to answer in any particular way. He is the Creator; we are the created. His answers should cause us to submit humbly to him and his ways, and to hand over our desire to control the outcome. Questioning God with the right posture will lead us to surrender fully to him, and to trust him when we are totally 'in the dark'.

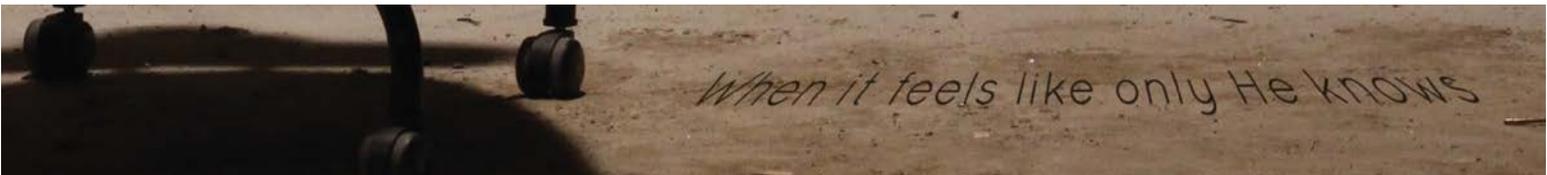
- ❖ Q: What was the answer that God gave to Habakkuk and why was it totally unexpected? (Habakkuk 1:6)
- ❖ Q: Why do we find it to difficult to trust God in tough circumstances?
- ❖ Q: What does it mean to have a posture of humility when we ask God questions about what he is doing in our lives?
- ❖ Q: What would it look like for us to surrender truly to God's ways and trust him when we are in the dark? Have you ever been able to do this, and how did that trust impact your life and faith?

2. Questioning God Faithfully Must Be Rooted In His Revealed Character

- Read Habakkuk 1:12-13

Habakkuk's posture begins to change as he encounters God. He becomes more aware of his 'creatureliness' and his limitations, and he begins to change his posture to one of faithfulness, so that his questions become rooted in God's revealed character. As a Hebrew prophet, he would have known the Scriptures, and his response is full of references to God's nature and character:

- i. God is Israel's eternal dwelling place and protector (Deut 33:26-29)
- ii. God is just and loves justice (Deut 32:3-4)
- iii. God is too holy to allow evil to persist (Psalm 1:5-6 & 11:5)
- iv. God cannot abandon the righteous to suffer at the hands of the unrighteous (Psalm 35)



When it feels like only He knows

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Even though Habakkuk could not understand how God would raise up the wicked Babylonians to bring judgment against his own people, Judah, he did not give up on God and run to worldly solutions or answers. Instead, he reasoned and tried to take comfort from what he knew about God from the Scriptures. It was not an easy task because he knew that what was coming was frightening and awful, but he had that anchor for his soul. We must be careful to not question God from a place of unbelief and ignorance. We must get to know his character through his word.

- ❖ Q: Why is it so appealing for us to run to the world to look for solutions and answers when things seem to be falling apart around us?
- ❖ Q: What was it about Habakkuk that was faithful to God, even in his questioning?
- ❖ Q: What can we learn and apply to our own lives from Habakkuk's way of dealing with the terrible news of Judah's fate?
- ❖ Q: How should we be responding to the difficulties facing our country at the moment, based on this passage?

3. Wrestled To Surrender

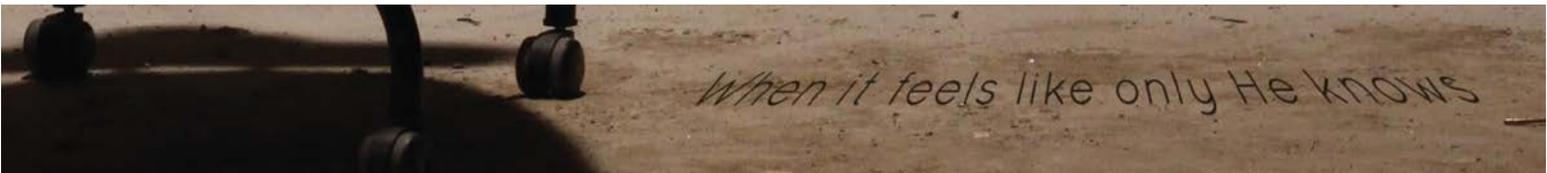
- Read Habakkuk 2:1

Habakkuk had a one sided perspective when he first approached God. All he could see was how Judah was suffering, but he had not kept in mind the fact that they had continually rebelled against God and turned away from his commands, rejecting the covenant. He questioned God's justice until he was given God's just response, which was that that Judah was to be judged, not delivered. Habakkuk probably hadn't even realized his oversight until confronted with truth and justice from God's perspective, and this caused Habakkuk to surrender to God's will and purposes. In surrendering, he still continued to pursue God, and wanted to understand, and so he waited patiently for the Lord to answer. And God did answer. Habakkuk's response is a model example of surrender, patience and pursuing God, even in extreme difficulty. Jesus did the same perfectly on the cross!

- ❖ Q: Why is it encouraging for us to see the turnabout in Habakkuk?
- ❖ Q: What lies do you sometimes believe about God's character that needs to be confronted with the truth?
- ❖ Q: What does Habakkuk's response to God teach us about how to wait for God?

Concluding Question:

- ❖ Q: What is the one big take-away that God wants you to go home with this week from this text?



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