

**September 28, 2020**

Today's words of challenge and encouragement.

Every Christian may encounter times in life when they may feel that God is not in control that evil is winning. Yet, Christians must remain steadfast in their faith understanding that even though it may seem God is inactive or defeated that everything in this world is moving according to God's plan and purpose. Read with me from the prophet Habakkuk 1:1-4.

*1 The oracle which Habakkuk the prophet saw. 2 How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, "Violence!" Yet You do not save. 3 Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause me to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises. 4 Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted.*

Our world seems to be spiraling out of control. Everywhere we look we see violence and evil. We seem to be living in the time which Jesus warned us about as He declared, "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). As we witness the evil in the world and see great injustices and increasing oppression and persecution we wonder if God is paying attention. We cry out, "God I don't understand?"

Habakkuk was a prophet to Judah during the Babylonian conquest. Habakkuk challenges God to help him understand why God would treat His people in such a horrible way. God answers Habakkuk and gives him an answer he did not expect.

Habakkuk's question to God is perhaps the same as one of our questions to God. Habakkuk asked God in essence, "God, I don't

understand what you are doing? Why are You letting Your people be treated so horribly?” It seemed to Habakkuk that God was doing nothing at all. It appeared that God was allowing injustice and evil to triumph among His people. And God remained silent-for a time.

Habakkuk was not the only one in Scripture to question the injustice and evil taking place among God’s people. Asaph the Psalmist compares the ways of God with those of His people and challenges, “God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. How long will you judge unjustly And show partiality to the wicked? Selah. Vindicate the weak and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.” (Psalm 82:1-4).

We also look around at the violence and injustice taking place through out the world and here in our own nation and ask God, “What is going on? Why don’t You do something to stop this insanity?” We feel that God is ignoring our questions and our pleas for help and deliverance. It is as if God is doing nothing at all. God seems silent.

Do we really want to hear or receive God’s answer to our questions? Perhaps, God is calling us to be His hands and feet in this world.

God answered Habakkuk and God answers us. God allows people to follow their own wisdom as they try to “fix” all the perceived problems in the world. Problems like injustice, oppression, poverty, economic disparity, human trafficking, the search for lasting peace, as well as numerous other problems. It seems as if God is being overrun by evil. Yet, God is not being overrun by evil rather God allows the evil to take place.

James speaks to the source of the folly of worldly wisdom as he admonishes, “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him

show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:13-18).

Paul provides a very hard answer for us to accept when he instructs, “What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses, ‘I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.’ So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.’ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires” (Romans 9:14-18).

So, what is God doing? God explains to Habakkuk the contrast between the people of this world and His people. God declares, “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). Those who are living in their pride are inward focused and certain that their wisdom is best; whereas those who live by their faith will seek to serve God and live in obedience to Him.

In the end God will deliver His people. In the meantime God is using the faithful to share and teach others about God’s mercy and grace. God’s

faithful are to proclaim God's grace and love until the time when "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

God's ways are often too difficult for us to fully comprehend. Nevertheless, we believe in faith that God is working out His plan for the salvation of His people and His people are those who by faith believe in His Son, Jesus for forgiveness of sin. You may not understand what God is doing in your life or in the world around you. But trust in Him and prayerfully seek His guidance and direction for you every day through Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Let us pray.

*Sovereign Lord God, I thank You for Your wisdom, compassion, and love. Please help us to grow in faith and understanding. Guide us through this life Holy Spirit as we look forward to Jesus' return in great power and glory. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.*

Remember God's ways are not our ways. Trust in Him always.

Until the nets are full