

When God Doesn't Make Sense [Habakkuk 1:12 – 2:4]

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Big Idea: Faith is trusting God's heart when you can't see His hands.

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// INTRODUCTION [Homemade Mexican Food]

Now imagine this... you're following your mom's handwritten recipe. The instructions seem completely backwards. The ingredients don't make sense, the cooking temperature seems off, and everything inside you says, *"This isn't right."* But here's the thing: your mom has been making this flawless for 60 years, and it's always perfect. ***So, you follow her recipe, even when it doesn't make sense to you, because you've tasted the fruit of her work before, and you trust her.***

That's where we find ourselves today in this series, *"When God Doesn't."* Sometimes God's recipe for our life feels off. The instructions just don't make sense. The process is too slow, too difficult, or just plain wrong. ***But the question isn't whether we understand God's methods; it's whether we trust His heart.***

// WEEK 2: Book of Habakkuk

- Pastor Blaine's message about Habakkuk's first complaint: *"God, why don't you fix the injustice?"*
- God's response created more questions than answers... *"I'm raising up the Babylonians."*

Today we're going to see Habakkuk ask a second question, one that might even be more troubling... *"Why them, God?"* It's a question asked in hospital rooms, unemployment offices, and in broken relationships. ***It's the question we ask when God's plan not only doesn't make sense but seems to make everything worse.***

// RECAP: Habakkuk [The prophet who dared to ask "why?"]

Let me reintroduce you to Habakkuk, a prophet unlike any other in the Bible. His name literally means "embrace" or "wrestle," and both fit perfectly for who he was. He was a man who wrestled with God but never let Him go.

- Writing around 605 BC, Habakkuk lived during one of Israel's darkest periods. ***The nation of Israel was spiritually bankrupt...*** corruption through every level of society, violence in the streets, and injustice everywhere.
- The King, Jehoiakim, was more interested in lining his pockets than seeking after God's heart.
- ***The righteous felt abandoned while the wicked were prospering.***
- Habakkuk was different from other prophets in the Bible because of His approach. ***Most prophets we read in the OT spoke TO the people FOR God. Habakkuk spoke TO God FOR the people.*** [Israel's prayer warrior]

Here's what I love about Habakkuk... he asked the questions we're all thinking but often afraid to voice.

If that's you today...

God can handle your questions. He's not threatened or upset by your honesty. He's not shocked by your confusion. In fact, he welcomes it! ***Throughout the Bible, we see God's people wrestling with Him...*** Abraham arguing for Sodom and Gomorrah, Moses pleading for Israel, and David crying out in the Psalms.

Your questions don't disqualify you from the faith; they actually deepen it.

This connects us to where we are today. Think about our world right now... we see injustice, corruption, and evil seemingly winning. We watch good people suffer while those who blatantly mock God appear to prosper. ***We're asking the same questions Habakkuk asked 2600 years ago.***

Sometimes following Jesus leaves us with more questions than answers, and if that's where you are today, this message is just for you.

// HABAKKUK'S 2ND COMPLAINT: "Why THEM, God?" [Habakkuk 1:12-17]

Last week, Habakkuk asked, "How long?" Now, he's asking, "Why them?"

¹²O LORD my God, my Holy One, you who are eternal— surely you do not plan to wipe us out? O LORD, our Rock, you have sent these Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. ¹³But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil. Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they? ¹⁴Are we only fish to be caught and killed? Are we only sea creatures that have no leader? ¹⁵Must we be strung up on their hooks and caught in their nets while they rejoice and celebrate? ¹⁶Then they will worship their nets and burn incense in front of them. "These nets are the gods who have made us rich!" they will claim. ¹⁷Will you let them get away with this forever? Will they succeed forever in their heartless conquests? [Habakkuk 1:12-17]

Notice how Habakkuk starts this conversation with God. ***He begins with what he KNOWS about God's character.*** You are holy, eternal. You are our Rock. THEN, he presents the contradiction he can't reconcile... *"You hate sin, so why are You using the most sinful nation on earth to accomplish Your purposes?"*

It would be like watching your kid's school hire a convicted arsonist to teach fire safety. It makes no sense! The Babylonians were just militarily powerful; they were ruthlessly cruel. They worshipped their own strength, showed no mercy to the innocent, and had absolutely no regard for God. ***Yet somehow God was using them as His instrument of judgment.***

Have you ever had a "why them" moment?

- You're the one who loses your job while the coworker who barely shows up keeps theirs.
- You eat healthy and exercise, but get diagnosed with cancer while your chain-smoking neighbor is perfectly fine.
- You invest years in a friendship only to be betrayed, while toxic relationships around you seem to thrive.
- You pray and work hard for your marriage, only to struggle while others who mock their commitment seem to stay together.

Habakkuk is wrestling with the same question here. He says it's as if God is treating people like fish caught in a net... no dignity, no care, just mass capture. Why are THEY successful when THEY are completely godless?

Remember the words from another prophet in the OT...

⁸"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. ⁹For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts. [Isaiah 55:8-9]

Often, God's ways don't make sense to us because He has a perspective we don't. God can see the entire map, while we can only see the next intersection.

// THE WATCHTOWER: How do we wait without walking away [Habakkuk 2:1]

How do we wait without walking away from the faith?

No doubt, there are some here today who are about to walk away from God because you don't understand what He is doing. You're tired of waiting for answers that don't come. You're exhausted from trying to make sense of circumstances that seem senseless.

¹I will climb up to my watchtower and stand at my guardpost. There I will wait to see what the LORD says and how he will answer my complaint. [Habakkuk 2:1]

A watchtower in ancient times was a place of three things:

- **EXPECTATION** – a place where you were looking for something.
- **ELEVATION** – a place to get perspective.
- **ENDURANCE** – a place where you stayed even when nothing was happening.

Habakkuk models for us what I'm going to call "the sacred art of waiting." **It's not PASSIVE RESIGNATION, it's ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT.**

Habakkuk shows us how to navigate this...

- Stay in conversation with God.
- Maintain expectancy without demanding immediate answers.
- Wrestle without walking away.

Think about it this way...

Alex taking organic chemistry... The math and formulas didn't make sense. There was no logic to it. But she didn't drop the class. She kept going, kept asking questions, kept trusting the process the professor was walking her through.

Or consider parents waiting in a hospital room while their child undergoes surgery. They can't see what's happening in the operating room. They don't understand all the medical terminology, and the

surgery is taking longer than expected. But they don't leave. They trust the surgeon's skill and stay in the waiting room. That's the watchtower posture... **trusting God's heart when you can't see His hands.**

The watchtower isn't about having all the answers; it's about positioning yourself to receive whatever God wants to show you.

// GOD'S RESPONSE: The foundation of faith [Habakkuk 2:2-4]

God's response to Habakkuk is a game-changer.

²Then the LORD said to me, "Write my answer plainly on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others. ³This vision is for a future time. It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled. If it seems slow in coming, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed. [Habakkuk 2:2-3]

I believe God is saying two important things here...

- 1. This message is important enough to write down.**
 - What's coming next isn't just for Habakkuk or even Israel; it's for anyone who finds themselves in the watchtower of waiting.
- 2. God's timing is different from ours, but it's always perfect.**
 - What seems like a delay to us is precision to God.

Let's be honest, we live in an Amazon Prime world where we expect everything delivered to us in two days or less. But God works on a different kind of time, agricultural time – planting, growing, seasons, harvest. Some things simply can't be rushed.

When we demand immediate answers and results, we risk missing the deeper work God wants to do in us during the waiting.

Here's the game changer...

⁴"Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God. [Habakkuk 2:4]

This single verse is quoted three different times in the NT... Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. It became the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther realized that righteousness comes through faith, not works. This verse has sustained followers of Jesus through persecution, exile, and seasons of uncertainty for over 2500 years.

The proud live by what they can see and control, but the righteous live by trust in what they cannot see but know to be true.

¹Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. [Hebrews 11:1]

⁷For we live by believing and not by seeing. [2 Corinthians 5:7]

What does it mean to live by faith when everything around you is telling you not to trust God?

FAITH IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF QUESTIONS

Even Jesus asked, "Why?" - From the cross he asked, *"My God, my God, WHY have you forsaken me?"*
If the Son of God can ask this question in his darkest hour, you can too.

Having faith doesn't mean having all the answers. It means staying connected to the One who does.
Your doubts don't disqualify you; they can actually deepen your faith. The key is to take your questions to God.

WE CAN'T DEMAND IMMEDIATE ANSWERS

Again, we live in a world of instant gratification. We want what we want now. ***But when we bring our consumer mentality to our faith, we're setting ourselves up for disappointment and doubt.***

When we demand that God give us immediate answers, we risk...

- Missing the deeper work, He wants to do in us through the waiting.
- Making poor decisions based on our limited perspective.
- Walking away from the very place God wants to meet us.

// LIVING BY FAITH [5 practical steps]

1. Stay in conversation with God.

- Keep praying even when it doesn't feel like God is listening.
- ***Bring all your questions and emotions to God.***

2. Remember God's past faithfulness.

- ***Journal about times God has come through before.*** [Ebenezer stones]
- Let your history with God shape your hope in God.

3. Focus on God's character, not your circumstances.

- When our situations change, God's character remains constant.
- His love, wisdom, and power don't fluctuate when our feelings do.
- ***Anchor yourself in who He is.***

4. Find community.

- Isolation breeds doubt: community builds faith.
- ***Be honest about your struggles with trusted friends.***
- Let others pray for you when you can't pray for yourself.

5. Keep doing the next right thing.

- ***Faith isn't just believing; it's behaving like you believe.***
- Small steps of obedience build confidence in God's character.

When God's ways don't make sense, we're tempted to...

- Question God's goodness or competence.

- Take matters into our own hands.
- Adopt the world's methods for success.
- Give up on doing the right thing.

²⁸*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. [Romans 8:28]*

The Apostle Paul does NOT say all things are good; they aren't. He does say God works in all things for our good.

Let me give you the historical perspective that Habakkuk couldn't see at the time...

- Babylon did indeed judge Judah's sin, which led to their exile in 586 BC.
- But Babylon was also judged for its cruelty when it fell to the Persians in 539 BC.
- The exile was a purification process for God's people.
- The remnant that returned was spiritually stronger and more committed to God.
- Most importantly, the Messiah (Jesus) would eventually come through this refined remnant.

Habakkuk couldn't see that God was preparing His people for the coming of Jesus. ***The very suffering that seemed senseless was actually essential to God's plan for the salvation of the world.***

Think of it like a master chess player competing against a beginner. The novice looks at the board and thinks, *"This makes no sense, he just gave me his queen!"* But the master can see fifteen moves ahead and knows that sacrificing the queen will lead to checkmate. ***What looks like loss is actually the setup for victory.***

That's how God works in our lives. He sees the character that needs to be developed. He sees the purpose that needs to be fulfilled. ***What seems like punishment might actually be preparation. What looks like abandonment might actually be positioning.***

When God doesn't make sense, we have a choice. We can demand that He explain Himself, or we can anchor ourselves to His character and faithfulness.

Faith is trusting God's heart when you can't see His hands.

This week, instead of demanding that God make sense to you, ask Him to help you make sense of what it means to trust Him. Build your own watchtower, a place where you regularly meet with God, especially when nothing makes sense.