

Sermon Title: When God Doesn't

By: Pastor Elizabeth Daigle

Key Scriptures: [Habakkuk 3:1-19]

¹ This prayer was sung by the prophet Habakkuk: ² I have heard all about you, Lord. I am filled with awe by your amazing works. In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by. And in your anger, remember your mercy.

³ I see God moving across the deserts from Edom, the Holy One coming from Mount Paran. His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise. ⁴ His coming is as brilliant as the sunrise. Rays of light flash from his hands, where his awesome power is hidden. ⁵ Pestilence marches before him; plague follows close behind. ⁶ When he stops, the earth shakes. When he looks, the nations tremble. He shatters the everlasting mountains and levels the eternal hills. He is the Eternal One! ⁷ I see the people of Cushan in distress, and the nation of Midian trembling in terror.

⁸ Was it in anger, Lord, that you struck the rivers and parted the sea? Were you displeased with them? No, you were sending your chariots of salvation! ⁹ You brandished your bow and your quiver of arrows. You split open the earth with flowing rivers. ¹⁰ The mountains watched and trembled. Onward swept the raging waters. The mighty deep cried out, lifting its hands in submission. ¹¹ The sun and moon stood still in the sky as your brilliant arrows flew and your glittering spear flashed.

¹² You marched across the land in anger and trampled the nations in your fury. ¹³ You went out to rescue your chosen people, to save your anointed ones. You crushed the heads of the wicked and stripped their bones from head to toe. ¹⁴ With his own weapons, you destroyed the chief of those who rushed out like a whirlwind, thinking Israel would be easy prey. ¹⁵ You trampled the sea with your horses, and the mighty waters piled high.

¹⁶ I trembled inside when I heard this; my lips quivered with fear. My legs gave way beneath me, and I shook in terror. I will wait quietly for the coming day when disaster will strike the people who invade us. ¹⁷ Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!

¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

(For the choir director: This prayer is to be accompanied by stringed instruments.)

Main idea: Faith that overcomes doesn't depend on what we see, but on who God has proven Himself to be.

Key points:

- Deep faith, like weightlifting, grows slow after dedicated efforts. This typically happens more in seasons of pain and seasons of pleasure.
- When times were tough and the enemy was literally marching at the door, Habakkuk taught us to do three things:
 - **Look In** – be honest with our unfair circumstances and the evil that is happening all around us and the impact it has to us. Share that with God and with your community.
 - **Look Back** – when you are in the pit, just the simple act of remembering what God has done in history and in your life is an act of faith.
 - **Look Up** – the Sovereign Lord is our Strength (Habakkuk 3:19). Set your mind on things above and not on earthly things (Colossians 3:2).

Life Group Discussion Questions
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WARM-UPS

1. Were you able to attend Gospel Sunday last week in the park? If so, what were your favorite aspects of the day?
2. Do you like to listen to worship music? What drives you to listen to it?

DISCUSSION

1. Are you familiar with Corrie ten Boom or John Perkins? How did the overview of their testimony impact you? Have situations in your own life caused you to ask the “Why” questions to God like they did?
2. Have you had the experience of sore muscles after lifting weights? How did Pastor Elizabeth’s teaching on muscle tears relate to “heart tears” that inflict us when hit hard by a troubled relationship, a bad medical diagnosis, or a financial storm?
3. What does the story of Amina’s visions and the passing of her son teach us about life and death? Have you ever experienced a dream of vision like Amina? How did God use that in your life?

IN THE WORD

1. **Psalm 56:3** says, *“When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”* Some may know that from a children’s worship song. But for David, fleeing for his life from King Saul and his mighty army, it was very real. When have you experienced this in your life?
2. **Matthew 6:33-34** says, *“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”* What pending things in your life do you need to surrender to God?

PRACTICE

- What worries, complaints or laments are you experiencing right now in your life? How might this Habakkuk series or the stories presented in today’s sermon be used in your life to help you build a strength strong enough to give you hope even in the midst of these trials?
 - Take time to meditate on each of Pastor Elizabeth’s three steps to:
 - Look In
 - Look Back
 - Look Up
- Think about areas of your life where building faith has been difficult. Maybe there is an area where you keep control and have not surrendered it to God.
 - What fear or other emotion is holding you back?
 - How might the testimonies of Corrie ten Boom, John Perkins or Amina give you the creativity or courage you need to surrender to God?