

**Habakkuk 1.1 – 11: How Long, O Lord?**  
**Redemption Hill Church | Simon Murphy**  
**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

**Habakkuk 1.1-11**

**1.1:** There is not a huge amount known about Habakkuk. He seems to be a man like you and I. His book is an account of his personal, private wrestling with God, as opposed to a thundering pronouncement of judgment on Israel. He is a man who had questions and struggles with what was going on around him, as we can also have.

We sometimes think of the prophets as white haired, wild eyed lunatics shouting at people. Some of them were, but most were just people like you and I. When we elevate bible characters above our own, we disqualify ourselves from responding to God the way they did.

But they were men like us. James 5.17 says that Elijah was a man just like us.

Habakkuk's day was a day of great sin and idolatry which resulted in violence, fighting, wickedness etc. Israel had largely abandoned God, and they were living in the fruit of their decisions.

We too live in a dark day, where people have walked away from the author of life and the only direction that you can head in when you walk from life, is death.

**Habakkuk cries out to God in great pain. Pain is a result of the fall and is helpful to us in that it tells us that something is wrong. The world we are in lives in great pain.**

**1. It tells us that something is wrong | And something really is wrong - US**

**2. It makes us look for a remedy | which must be outside us – JESUS**, so we don't turn the world into one big Martha's kitchen, running around with our good ideas and good works, we join Jesus on His mission to save the world. We preach Jesus, the gospel which changes hearts, reconciles people to God and changes the world.

**There are those who ask:** if God is so good then why do bad things happen? You need to ask it properly. If you phrase the question that way you are putting yourself in the center of world asking God to explain Himself. The way we should ask it is like this: 'How can a holy and righteous God know what I did and thought and said yesterday and not end my life while I slept last night?'

**1.2-4:** There are three ways that people typically respond to wickedness of our day:

1. Enjoy it and indulge in it. They like to quote Paul in 1 Cor 9 that all things are permissible, and that we should become all things to all men. This is incorrect.
2. Flee from it and hide! These people like to quote Paul in 2 Cor 6 that we should come out and be separate! This is like the Amish, and those who lived in monasteries. In our day it's those who don't go to movies, homeschool their kids for fear of the world, and only hang out their Christian friends.
3. Ignore it, be ignorant of it. These people don't realize how bad the world is. They say it's not that bad. This is because our generation has only known the dark day we are living in. We do not have a reference for life any other way.

But Christians are called to **to be like Jesus, who came to earth, lived amongst sinners**, live in our culture, not running away into monasteries, escaping from our day but living it, seeing the sin, and bringing Christ to situations. 'The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us', John 1.14. Jesus himself prayed for us in John 17: 'I do not pray that you take them out of the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one'. **We at RHC seek to do this, to live fully in the world, but as those who are not from it.**

**The situation drives Habakkuk to his knees.** What gets us to God in prayer? Pain? Jonah prayed too late.. in the belly of the whale instead of before he boarded the boat!

His chief concern with God is: God are you awake? Are you acting? Do you even know what is going on here?! **Do we ever feel like this? David did in the Psalms, and Jesus did on the cross.**

The danger is we confuse God's apparent inactivity as endorsing the sin, or that he doesn't mind what's happening. 2 Peter 3.8 : Don't mistake God's patience for weakness.

**So Habakkuk has FEAR.** Fear is a great way of knowing what we value. Because it tells us what we ultimately care about and are scared of losing. It is a great value revealer and also an idol revealer. What are we trusting in? In this light we understand Jesus' comments that 'perfect love drives out all fear'.

**1.3:** Why do you make me see iniquity? We can have a self righteous attitude to our sin, like we are above it, but actually we are all sinners. If we are tired of it, imagine how tired of it God is!!

**1.5-6:** God replies and says that indeed he is acting. We serve a God who is acting. He takes the initiative, he saves us, comes after us, while we were His enemies. This is our cue for how we are to treat other people. We initiate with them, reach out to them, love them.

But His actions are not what Habakkuk would chose or like to hear! Sometimes they are very different to what we expect. Truly God works in mysterious ways and his ways are higher than ours. **JOSEPH, JONAH, JESUS**

God uses wicked people for his purposes! Like Cyrus in Ezra 1. The Assyrians (Isaiah 10)

Romans 8.28: And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

**1.7-10:** This enemy that is coming is strong, and it destroys our idols which we place trust in. What are we trusting in? Our finances, our government, our qualifications? **Idols always disappoint us (Ps 16, Ps 115) and they cause us to forfeit God's grace in our circumstances (Jonah 2.8)**

This is why we need to run to Jesus. He is the only true and sure One.

Psalm 62.11: One thing I have heard, two things have been spoken. That you, O Lord are loving, and that you O God, are strong.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. We serve a God who is Sovereign
2. We serve a God who loves us
3. We serve a God who acts
4. We should trash our idols because they are offensive to God and ruin our lives.
5. We should run to, cling to, love Jesus with all our hearts.