Pastor Tim’s Message Notes 7-2-2023
Majoring in the Minors – Habakkuk

In many families and in many organizations, the number one problem that leads to dysfunction is poor communication. Poor communication leads to all kinds of misunderstands and problems. We could probably share numerous stories amongst us giving examples of this. Good communication, in contrast, helps to build strong and healthy families and organizations and with people in general.

But what makes good communication? Good communication involves openness and honesty. Good communication speaks the truth, but does so in love and with gentleness and humility. Good communication involves vulnerability and an ability to listen well and to be gracious with one another. Good communication seeks to understand even more than to be understood.

These traits are not very common in our world, but as we grow in Christ these things can and should become common for believers in Jesus Christ. And poor communication, of course, would be the opposite of all of these things.

As important as it is to develop into good communicators with other people, the most important relationship for anyone to have good communication with is with God. And this is one thing that I really love about today’s highlighted book in our journey through the minor prophets. This prophet Habakkuk, in his short but powerful book, gives us such a great example of healthy and good communication between himself and God. If fact, the book is really structured as a dialogue or conversation between Habakkuk and God. This dialogue is so honest and vulnerable and it reveals Habakkuk’s deep friendship with God.

But before we dive into this conversation, let’s set the context a little bit. While we do not really know much about the man Habakkuk, such as where exactly he was from or what his occupation may have been besides him being a prophet of the LORD, we do know from the contents of his book about when he would have lived. And it would have been after the northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity (722 BC) but before the southern kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity (586 BC). It was a time when the Jewish people were, by and large, not following the Lord.

This may very well have been during the reign of Manasseh. Much evil was practiced by the Jews during this time period. And while King Manasseh did repent of his sins and turn to the LORD late in his life, the nation of Judah was in a steep moral decline.

And Habakkuk was distraught about all the wrongs, all the injustice, that had become the norm. The violence that was common and the neglecting of God’s law.

And so we turn to this conversation between Habakkuk and God. And a good sign of communication is that there is openness and honesty and transparency. And Habakkuk rightly does not try to put on a happy face before God, but instead was complaining about the injustice in Judea and that God seemed to be silent. The wicked were pushing around the godly and God seemed to be ignoring it.

And Habakkuk basically asks God why He tolerates all this evil and injustice taking place in Judea. You are God. You are good. How long can you let this be? God is not offended by sincere prayer in this way. But then, God responds to Habakkuk’s question but in a way that truly really blows his mind. In fact, God tells that him he is going to be utterly amazing by God’s response. It was going to blow Habakkuk’s mind.

The LORD tells Habakkuk was in the process of raising up the Babylonians to be His instruments of judgment against Judah for its sins. God doesn’t deny that the Babylonians were ruthless, but He insists that this wicked nation would be used by Him to punish Israel.

And Habakkuk’s response to God was basically something like, “Say what?” We can read all of this in the book. I would encourage you to read it. Habakkuk was confused and angry with God’s answer. The Babylonians? They are more evil than us. Why raise them up, LORD?

So the dialogue continues with Habakkuk’s second question, which basically was this - why would You, God, raise up a nation more evil than us to be exalted in this way? They need to be punished more than we do.

And then Habakkuk basically says, I am ready and eager to listen to Your response God. And the dialogue continues with God again responding to Habakkuk’s question.

Please turn with me to chapter 2:2-4 as we listen in on some of the Lord’s words to Habakkuk.

2Then the Lord replied:

“Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.
3For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. 4“See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright— but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Habakkuk+2%3A2-4&version=NIV#fen-NIV-22753c)]—

& then verses 12-14

“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice! 13Has not the Lord Almighty determined that the people’s labor is only fuel for the fire, that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing? 14For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Friends, what is happening here? What is happening is that God is telling Habakkuk that He is aware of injustice everywhere and it will be dealt with by God.

God goes on to tell Habakkuk that Babylon will also be eventually punished for their sins as well. Even though in the short-term Babylon will be lifted up instead of being brought low, eventually, the proud and cruel Babylonians will be brought low just as Judah was soon to be brought low.

In other words, God was not rubber stamping the actions of the Babylonians as being in any way good or noble or godly. God was not endorsing the Babylonians, but He was using the Babylonians.

What this dialogue is making very clear is that God is sovereign over all the nations and He has the right to use nations for His purposes. At that time, the popular view was that military success of a nation proved that Your gods were bigger and more powerful than the gods of the nations that are conquered. But the Lord was willing to look weak in order to advance His purposes in bringing about a faithful human family.

In our highlighted passages, there are two verses that I would like to camp on for a bit. The first is chapter 2 verse 4. The LORD says, “See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright – but the righteous person will live by His faithfulness.”

What God is saying here is that while it is true that Babylon is puffed up with pride in their conquests, that did not make them righteous and pleasing in God’s sight. Rather, God considers people to be righteous or pleasing in His sight when they trust in God and in God’s goodness and faithfulness, even when their own circumstances and situations look very difficult.

Let’s put ourselves in Habakkuk’s shoes for a moment. Habakkuk’s future did not look to be a very happy one. His nation was about to be conquered by a nation more evil than his own. And not only this, but the Babylonians would be puffed up with pride because of this conquest.

But the righteous person will live by His faithfulness. God was inviting Habakkuk to trust in Him and to stand strong on the truth of God’s faithfulness.

And this leads to our second verse to highlight this morning, which is chapter 2 verse 14. God tells Habakkuk, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

God is telling Habakkuk that He has a plan that is bigger than Judah. In fact, God’s plan would impact each and every nation. Ultimately, the knowledge of the glory of the LORD would fill the earth just as the waters cover the sea. No nation will be untouched by the knowledge of the glory or power of the LORD.

This reminds me of Jesus telling His disciples that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judah, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF THE LORD IS THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST.

Finally, before we turn to our main takeaway from Habakkuk, I would like to also share that this powerful book concludes with a beautiful prayer by Habakkuk in chapter 3. It concludes this healthy dialogue captured in the book with Habakkuk’s words of trust.

I love the last 3 verses of Habakkuk, where the prophet writes these words of trust in God.

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.”

What powerful words of trust in the goodness and faithfulness of God that Habakkuk writes.

As we consider this book of Habakkuk, what is the main takeaway from us today? And I believe that it is this. The LORD invites us to be in dialogue with Him as Habakkuk was. He invites us to talk with Him about everything in life – the good, the bad, and the ugly. He wants us to be real with Him and to trust in Him no matter the circumstances.

Another word for this healthy dialogue is prayer. Prayer involves both talking and listening. Both are critical to the strengthening of any relationship, not least the relationship between each of us and God. In the New Testament, we are told to pray without ceasing. I believe that this speaks to us having an awareness that God is with us always and that we can talk and listen to Him all the time. God desires this from us.

And as we seek to do this well, it will impact us tremendously.

First, having a deep and honest dialogue in prayer with God will help us grow in our knowledge of God. We learn God’s ways and be grow more like Him. He sees things from every angle and we are limited in this way. But He can help us to see things more clearly and we will grow in our knowledge of God.

Being in the Bible is also meant to be one expression of our prayer. We are to read it prayerfully. We listen to the LORD intently. We grow in Christ.

Second, we are reminded through a deep prayer life with God and through examples like Habakkuk, that God is at work is so many ways that are beyond our individual lives. While He does care for us and invite us to have a beautiful and eternal relationship with Him, God is also at work all over the world.

Habakkuk likely did not live to see the Jews return from their exile in Babylon himself, but he lived by God’s faithfulness.

God is continuing to make the knowledge of His glory known throughout the earth, just as the waters cover the sea.

And third, this book invites us to trust in God and Jesus Christ even when things do not seem right. Sometimes today, like in the day of Habakkuk, things do not seem fair or just in the world. Evil may seem to be winning. Corruption may be rampant. This book reminds us that God still sees everything and everyone. And, like Habakkuk, we are called to trust in Him and His love and goodness even when present circumstances may seem bleak.

God has us, friends, in the palm of His hands. Jesus did not say that we would not have trouble in this world. In fact, in following Christ we are going against the current, against the grain, and this actually bring trouble our way.

But Jesus will never leave us and He will never forsake us. Know that He sees you and loves you. And we need not be afraid for the future, because Jesus will be with us as we walk with Him.

In conclusion, I would like to share a song with her called *Fear Is Not My Future.* May the words of this song remind you of Habakkuk choosing to live by God’s faithfulness rather than let fear of the future become his experience. And may this also be a message for each of us to live in the same way.

Let Him turn it in your favor
Watch Him work it for your good
'Cause He's not done with what He started
He's not done until it's good

So let Him turn it in your favor
Watch Him work it for your good
He's not done with what He started
He's not done until it's good

Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love
Hello, strength
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon

Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love
Hello, strength
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon (oh)

If you're ready for a breakthrough, yeah
Just open up and just receive, hey
'Cause what He's pouring out is nothing
You've ever seen (you've ever seen)
You've ever seen, yeah

Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love (hello)
Hello, strength (hey)
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon
Can you see the sun comin' up?

Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love (yeah, yeah)
Hello, strength (hey)
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon

It's just a new horizon
It's a new day
It's a new day
It's a new day
It's a new prayer

Fear is not my future
You are, You are (You are)
Sickness is not my story
You are, You are (You are)
Heartbreak's not my home
You are, You are (You are)
Death is not the end
You are, You are (You are)

Fear is not my future
You are, You are (You are)
Sickness is not my story
You are, You are (You are)
Heartbreak's not my home (you can't stay here no more)
You are, You are (You are) (death is not the end
Death is not the end (Jesus)
You are, You are (You are)

Hello
Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love
It's a new day
Hello, strength
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon (the sun is coming up)

Hello, peace
Hello, joy
Hello, love
Hello, strength
Hello, hope, it's a new horizon

Fear is not my
Fear is not my future
You are (You are), You are (You are)
Sickness is not your story
Sickness is not my story
You are (You are), You are (You are)
There's glory after this, heartbreaking
Heartbreak's not my home
You are, You are (You are)
Death is not the end
Death is not the end (you can feel it)
You are, You are (You are)
Somebody love

You are, You are (You are)
You are

You're writing the story
You're writing my story
Here we go, one more time, one more time

Fear is not
Fear is not my future
You are (You are), You are
Sickness is not your story
Sickness is not my story
You are, You are (You are)
Heartbreak
Heartbreak is not my home
You are (You are), You are
Death is not the end
Death is not the end
Jesus
You are (You are)

Resources: [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

Evangelical Seminary lecture notes – Prophets course – Dr. David A. Dorsey

<https://www.google.com/search?q=Fear+is+not+my+future+lyrics&sxsrf=AB5stBiMR1QGIWdsZdWUhbBUYNO27dL8VQ%3A1688401358791&source=hp&ei=zvWiZKHyLfSzptQPkeuQ0AM&iflsig=AD69kcEAAAAAZKMD3nb8Ft5E3662iOQPxgzaNnvKo2zj&ved=0ahUKEwihkeiZ-fL_AhX0mYkEHZE1BDoQ4dUDCAs&uact=5&oq=Fear+is+not+my+future+lyrics&gs_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEOgcIIxCKBRAnOgQIIxAnOhEILhCABBCxAxCDARDHARDRAzoLCAAQgAQQsQMQgwE6CwgAEIoFELEDEIMBOggIABCABBCxAzoOCC4QgAQQsQMQxwEQ0QM6CwguEIAEELEDEIMBOg4ILhCABBCxAxCDARDUAjoLCC4QgAQQxwEQrwE6CwguEIAEELEDENQCOgUILhCABDoLCC4Q1AIQsQMQgARQAFjnI2C8JGgAcAB4AIABrwGIAasSkgEEMjMuNZgBAKABAQ&sclient=gws-wiz>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_vci7-ivgs>

Maverick City Music (ft. Brandon Lake & Chandler Moore) - Fear Is Not My Future (with lyrics)(2022)

The World And The Word – An Introduction to the Old Testament – Chapter of the book of Habakkuk