**Baggage Week 3 - Habakkuk**

**Series Road Map**

**Series Overview:**

(Check Series Road Map)

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

“Alexander Hamilton” Lyrics from *Hamilton*

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

Why do bad things happen to good people? To God’s people?

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

Habakkuk 3:19

Habakkuk 1:2-4

Habakkuk 1:6

Habakkuk 1:12-13

Habakkuk 2:2-4

Habakkuk 3:16-19

**THP**:

Let go of the doubt you’re holding on to.

**Supporting Points (Not Required):**

N/A

**Application (Call to Action)**:

Worship Response (Suggestions: *You Keep Hope Alive*, *Now Here*, *Surrounded (Fight My Battles)*)

*Red – Scripture*

*Blue – Personal Story*

*Green – Prop*

***THP/Main Points – Bold***

**Grab the Room (Intro):**

Tonight, we are going to be talking about the prophet of Habakkuk. Yes, that is how you say it…Ha-bak-kuk. Not Haba-cook, and most certainly not Ha-backpack…Habakkuk.

Believe it or not, the name Habakkuk derives from the Hebrew verb “to embrace.” And so to help you better embrace God’s word tonight, go ahead and pull out your Bibles and turn to the book of Habakkuk so that you may follow along.

And if you don’t have your Bible with you tonight, that’s okay! Let me show you a verse real quick to chew on before we jump in.

Habakkuk 3:19 says,

The Sovereign Lord is my strength;

 he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,

 he enables me to tread on the heights.

*\*\*PRAY\*\**

I’ll tell you what, with July 4th being this past weekend, I couldn’t help but think of just how cool Independence Day truly is. This celebration where we collectively gather to reflect on and celebrate the start of our nation.

And you know what I think of when I think of the start of our nation? Hamilton.

That’s right…Hamilton! Where all my Hamilton fans at?!

Whether you’ve seen it or not, here’s what you need to know…the musical is all about the life story of one of our founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton. It’s about how he beat the odds and went from absolutely nothing to becoming one of the most well-known men in American history.

In fact, the musical’s opening scene is the song titled *Alexander Hamilton*. Check out some of these lyrics…

“*My name is Alexander Hamilton*

*And there’s a million things I haven’t done*

*But just you wait, just you wait*

*When he was ten, his father split, full of it, debt-ridden*

*Two years later, see Alex and his mother, bed-ridden*

*Half-dead, sittin’ in their own sick*

*The scent thick*

*And Alex got better but his mother went quick*

*Moved in with a cousin, the cousin committed suicide*

*Left him with nothin’ but ruined pride, somethin’ new inside*

*A voice saying "(Alex) you gotta fend for yourself"*

*He started retreatin’ and readin’ every treatise on the shelf.”*

Now wait…WHAT?! I mean seriously…when you hear those lyrics, you’ve got to wonder, “How the heck did he do it? How did he become what he did after all of that?”

If it were me in Alexander’s shoes and that was my childhood, I would have lost all hope. I would have given up; I would have doubted God in so many ways.

And tonight, I want to look to a similar story in Scripture…a time where at one point or another, hope was lost; doubt had crept in and convinced God’s people, and even one of His prophets, that He had abandoned them.

**Tension (What’s the Struggle):**

But first, since it’s been a few weeks since we last met, let me give you some historical background.

In week one we talked about Hosea, while in week two we talked about Micah. Both prophets lived during what’s called the “Divided Kingdom(s),” where Israel and God’s people had split in two…there was the Northern Kingdom, Israel, and the Southern Kingdom, Judah.

Now, I apologize in advance, but let the history geek in me nerd out for a second.

*\*\*MAP\*\**

To the north of the Divided Kingdoms was Assyria, while to the east was Babylonia.

Around 732 B.C., the Assyrians would start to invade the Northern Kingdom. And after about 10 years, the Assyrians would eventually capture the Northern Kingdom capital of Samaria in 722 and 721 B.C, leaving the Southern Kingdom of Judah to fend for itself.

Well then, just over 100 years later, the Southern Kingdom of Judah would soon be invaded by the Babylonians to the east.

Do you feel lost yet?

Whether you were able to follow along or not, here’s what you should know…God’s people were stuck. They were confused and scared. They were struggling to see God’s goodness and sovereignty in their lives because they were undergoing attack after attack. They were doubtful.

They were wrestling with the question of, “Why does God seem inactive in the face of evil and injustice?” Or, “How could a loving God allow so much suffering?” Or finally, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” Or more specifically, “Why do bad things happen to *God’s* people?”

It’s a great question to ask. It’s probably a question that you’ve thought before. And so know, too, that it’s an okay question to ask.

To prove that, let’s now look to the story of Habakkuk—a prophet that lived in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and most likely wrote his book just before the Babylonian invasion. I think right off the bat, you’ll see that even he asked a similar question of doubt.

**Text (+ Supporting Text):**

Habakkuk asks God in Habakkuk 1:2-4,

2 How long, Lord, must I call for help,

 but you do not listen?

Or cry out to you, “Violence!”

 but you do not save?

3 Why do you make me look at injustice?

 Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me;

 there is strife, and conflict abounds.

4 Therefore the law is paralyzed,

 and justice never prevails.

The wicked hem in the righteous,

 so that justice is perverted.

God then responds to Habakkuk, and pretty much tells him that He is allowing this to happen. In fact, He says in Habakkuk 1:6,

 I am raising up the Babylonians,

 that ruthless and impetuous people,

who sweep across the whole earth

 to seize dwellings not their own.

Seriously? God is “raising up” the Babylonians to do this? That’s wild! Why would he do such a thing?

Habakkuk immediately responds to this and says in Habakkuk 1:12-13,

12 Lord, are you not from everlasting?

 My God, my Holy One, you will never die.

You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment;

 you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.

13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;

 you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.

Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?

 Why are you silent while the wicked

 swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

Again, Habakkuk is asking the question, “Why does God allow evil things to happen?”

How does God reply? Well, let’s look.

Habakkuk 2:2-4 says,

2 Then the Lord replied:

“Write down the revelation

 and make it plain on tablets

 so that a herald may run with it.

3 For 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.

Did you see that? The last part of verse 4…”but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.”

Students—here is the one thing I want you to hear tonight…**Let go of the doubt you’re holding on to**.

I’ll say it again… **Let go of the doubt you’re holding on to**.

God is faithful. He NEVER goes back on His promises. Like it says in verse 3, “For the revelation awaits an appointed time…though it linger, wait for it.”

You see, God IS holy…He DOES care…and He WILL act…BUT, only in His good and perfect timing. You have to “wait for it.”

Is it normal to doubt? Absolutely. In fact, I would guarantee that every one of us has doubted at one point in time or another. And guess what? It’s going to keep coming!

Know that when I say **let go of the doubt you’re holding on to**, I’m NOT saying you should let go of doubt forever. Because at the end of the day, doubt will always creep in throughout our spiritual journeys.

But, how will you choose to go about doubt when it creeps in? Will you let it fester to the point that you walk away from God? OR, will you embrace it? Will you embrace (just like the word Habakkuk means) doubt, and choose patience, hope, and faithfulness in the midst of it?

Because God makes it clear in that last verse we just looked at! “See the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.”

How you respond matters.

**Application (Call to Action)**:

And so, check out Habakkuk’s response in Habakkuk 3:16-19, where it says,

16 I heard and my heart pounded,

 my lips quivered at the sound;

decay crept into my bones,

 and my legs trembled.

Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity

 to come on the nation invading us.

17 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,

18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord,

 I will be joyful in God my Savior.

19 The Sovereign Lord is my strength;

 he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,

 he enables me to tread on the heights.

You see, in Habakkuk 1 and Habakkuk 2, Habakkuk chooses to complain to God. But what is different about this passage? What is different about Habakkuk 3? Well, Habakkuk chooses to remember, pray and praise.

Habakkuk remembers that God is sovereign and in control. Habakkuk remembers that God never goes back on His promises.

And so, by remembering these things, he could be hopeful; by remembering these things, he could respond in a way that put his attention back on God.

So, again, I ask…how will you respond?

This choice of how we respond to doubt reminds me of a clip from one of my favorite movies as a child. It’s a scene where the main character loses all hope. Yet, his best friend reminds him of what it means to remain hopeful. Check this out.

Lord of the Rings Message Clip

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6C8SX0mWP0>)

You may have noticed Sam say, “The ones that really matter…they had lots of chances at turning back, only they didn’t. They kept going, because they were holding onto something…that there’s some good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for.”

Students—don’t turn back when faced with doubt. Rather…fight. “But \_\_\_\_, how do I fight in the midst of this?” Well, we just read how Habakkuk responded. Through remembrance, prayer, and praise.

So now, I want to give you the opportunity to do the same. Struggling with doubt?

Remember…remember who God is, remember what He’s done, and remember what He’s promised to do.

Then, pray…pray to God for patience, and pray to God for hope.

And finally, praise…praise Him for who He is and what He will do. Know and trust that He’s going to take care of you.

Let’s pray and worship together.

*\*\*Worship Response Suggestions:*

*Surrounded (Fight My Battles)*

*You Keep Hope Alive*

*Now Here*

*\*\*GENERAL CLOSING & PRAYER*