



Sermon, Sunday October 2, 2022 “Let’s Live by Three Faiths”

SCRIPTURE: Habakkuk 1:1-4 & 2:1-4 ^{1:1}The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. ²O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? ³Why do you make me see wrong-doing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. ⁴So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

^{2:1} I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. ²Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. ³For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. ⁴Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

Introduction: Two Questions of the Prophet Habakkuk to the Lord

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Difficulties sometime come in our lives, and if we do not have a way to solve our difficulties, we become discouraged. In this situation, we ask God: **“Lord! Why are you silent about our difficulties and sorrows? How long will you let us live in pain?”**

In today's text, Habakkuk, a prophet in southern Judah, asks the Lord a similar question. However, during the time of the prophet Habakkuk, Judah was threatened externally by powerful countries such as Babylon and Egypt, and internally. It was a dark time when God's justice was broken.

The prophet Habakkuk asks God two questions while watching the Babylonian army attack and kill and take the Jews living in Jerusalem into captivity around 606 B.C. **First, it asks, “O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save? (Habakkuk 1:1)”** Second, it asks, **“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? (Habakkuk 1:13)”**

To the first question, **the Lord answers in Habakkuk 1:6, “I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.”**

This verse means that God uses the wicked as instruments of punishment for the fallen righteous.

To the second question, today's passage 2:3 answers; “For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.”

This verse promises that the wicked will be judged, and the sufferings of the righteous will surely be repaid by the Lord. **And the Lord says, “the righteous live by their faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4).**

Then, what does it mean to say, **“the righteous live by their faith”?**



Body: What does it mean to live by faith?

First, we must live by the love of Jesus on the cross and the hope of resurrection.

In today's text, the Jews at the time when the prophet Habakkuk was active did not know what Jesus' love for the cross and resurrection was. However, the meaning of Jesus' love on the cross and the resurrection over death as proclaimed in the New Testament are applied for the Jews of the age of Habakkuk.

Jesus' love on the cross was possible because of his obedient heart that enabled him to completely follow God's will, not his own. For the people of Israel in the Old Testament times, that meant following God's will in complete obedience to the words of God's law. However, in the Old Testament, obeying God's law is not merely a formal act of keeping the commandments, but thorough obedience to God's will, loving our neighbor, and practicing justice. Although the people of Israel did not know about Jesus' death on the cross, they knew the importance of "**the attitude and heart of thorough obedience to God's will**" that the cross meant.

This is applying to the resurrection of Jesus, too. The resurrection of Jesus means the victory over the powers of sin and death. The Old Testament book of Isaiah contains the promises of the Lord to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, joy to the mourning, and healing to the sick. This is the Old Testament description of the resurrected Jesus who conquered the powers of sin and death. The people of Judah in today's text forgot to obey the Lord. So, they were judged by the Gentiles, suffered under their sins, and cried to the Lord, they were saved by the grace of the Lord. Please remember. When we obey the will of the Lord rather than live according to our will, we are saved through His grace from the power of sin and death.

The world can never defeat those who live by faith. Only the love of the Lord and the power of resurrection can save us. And our right response to this is to obey the Lord's will. I hope that we can always obey the Lord by not forgetting the love of the cross and the power of resurrection. What does it mean to live by faith?

Second, we must live with the hope of the promises of Christ during difficulties.

Whether we have faith or not is most evident when we are in trouble. When difficulties come, we become desperate, and we know who we are through the choices of our hearts in desperation.

Today's text describes the Jewish people who were destroyed by Babylon and all hope was cut off by the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Some of the Jewish people who were taken to Babylon lost their identity as God's people and chose to live serving the gentile's idols, while others chose to live with trust in God's promise to restore the Israelites and lead them to Jerusalem.

However, what is needed for those who choose the word of God's promise is to wait and persevere by trusting in God's promise. **Hebrews 11:8 says: "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." And in verse 11, it says, "By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise."**

Even if trials come in our lives, I hope that we do not lose hope in Christ Jesus. Even if our lives don't always go the way we want them to, if we don't give up our hope in the Lord, we will experience healings and restorations in our spirits and bodies. May such blessings be with all of us. What does it mean to live by faith?

Third, we must live with the conviction that salvation is given by the grace of Christ, not through my merits or achievements.

Psalm 37:23-24 says: "If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumbles, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand." This verse shows that people easily fall and become discouraged in difficulties. But in moments of absolute despair, people can stand up again



because the Lord takes care of us. It is not because of our efforts or merits that we can overcome difficulties and despair, but because the Lord sustains us and pours out His grace.

The easy way to know whether we are living acknowledging the grace of the Lord or not is by checking whether we try to handle problems we face in life with our own strength and ability without the Lord's help or not. If we think that we have accomplished something with our own strength rather than the Lord's help, we will begin to trust in our own heart and strong will or effort rather than to be grateful to the Lord.

However, those who know and are convinced of the Lord's help have a heart of gratitude. Such gratitude becomes the strength to overcome despair and difficulties. However, a life dependent on oneself is bound to be frustrating at the most desperate moment. Because they think that the fundamental power of their life does not come from the Lord, but from themselves. In the days of the prophet Habakkuk in today's text, the Jewish people experienced great difficulties due to the oppression of Babylon and Egypt and the injustice of the fallen kings. But the godly Jewish people, trusting in the Lord's help, were able to turn their despair into gratitude. Like these godly Jewish people, I hope that you and I will experience the fullness of the grace of the Lord, who helps us and holds us firmly in our lives.

Conclusion: Trust in the love of the Lord and live by faith.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. To have faith means to be sure of the Lord's love for us. Because the Lord is the fundamental substance of love, it means that our hearts are filled with the love of the Lord. The Bible says that love overcomes all fear. The fears and worries about the future in our lives are the result of sin. However, love overcomes sin and brings us gratitude, joy, and fullness.

The Lord has promised us through **the words of Romans 8:35-39**. **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (v.35) As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'(v.36) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (v.37)”**

I pray that we all trust the love of the Lord and live each day by faith.

