

Reality, Grief and Hope

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Date: 16 July 2023

Preacher: Darren Jackson

[0 : 00] Today's reading is from Habakkuk 3, that's page 942 on your Bibles. A prayer of Habakkuk, the prophet.

Lord, I have heard of your fame. I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day. In our time, make them known. In wrath, remember mercy.

God came from Taman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens and his praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise.

Rays flashed from his hand where his power was hidden. Plague went before him. Pestilence followed his steps. He stood and shook the earth.

He looked and made the nations tremble. The ancient mountains crumbled and the age-old hills collapsed. But he marches on forever.

[1 : 04] I saw the tents of Cushon in distress. The dwellings of Midian in anguish. Were you angry with the rivers, Lord?

Was your wrath against the streams? Did you rage against the sea when you rode your horses and your chariots to victory? You uncovered your bow. You called for many arrows.

You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed. Torrents of water swept by. The deep roared and lifted its waves on high. Sun and moon stood still in the heavens.

At the glint of your flying arrows. As lightning of your flashing spear. In wrath you strode through the earth. And in anger you threshed the nations.

You came out to deliver your people. To save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness. You stripped him from head to foot. With his own spear you pierced his head.

[2 : 09] When his warriors stormed out to scatter us. Gloating as though about to devour the wretched who were in hiding. You trampled the sea with your horses. Churning the great waters.

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 nations invading us. 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. There are no sheep in the sheepfold. And no cattles 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.

[3 : 07] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks very much. Morning everybody. Just before I start.

I was trying to think whether to draw attention to this. I've got an eye infection. So if everyone knew you think I'm winking at you about something I'm saying I'm not. It is probably just an infection. So I've got a cream. So if I'm talking about grief.

Which is one of the points. And I go like that. It's not supposed to be ironic. So we're looking as Martin said in this series. Where we're taking verses that we might know and love.

And bring a lot of encouragement. But sometimes can be used a bit out of context. Or sometimes maybe just thrown at people in the middle of situations. That we don't really have the depth of understanding about.

And one of the ones we have this morning. Is the last three verses of Habakkuk. Where we have the Old Testament prophet looking forward into the future. And he sees the destruction of his country.

[4 : 04] And more than that. He sees the material catastrophe. Where there's no food left. He's got nowhere left to eat. Yet he says these words. 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 sheep fold. And no cattle in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will be joyful in God my saviour. The sovereign Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He enables me to tread on the heights.

So even in suffering and loss. God will be his strength. And more than that. He will rejoice. It sounds great doesn't it? That whatever happens. We can say God's our strength.

And more than that. I'll rejoice in that. But I guess for most of us. That might sound a bit easier said than done. Than a lot of the time. Because we know the experience of life. That when we gather together as believers.

[5 : 03] We gather under these truths. We hold dearly. That God is good. That he is for his people. That he has a purpose and a will. That is based in love. Because he loves the world. And wants to save it.

And heal it. And bring it under his rulership. And into something new. And we don't just say these things. Because they sound nice. We say them because we can point. Into God's work in history. In the Old Testament.

This is the Exodus story. Of God redeeming his slaves. And his people. Out of Egypt. Into a new land. For us. That is the life. Death. And resurrection of Jesus.

As God comes and lives. And works. And moves among the people. And gives his life. So that we may have forgiveness of sins. And new life. Yet the reality of life.

For a lot of people. Is also. We look at the world. Around the boat. As Habakkuk is doing. And instead seeing. Rampant evil. And injustice. All over the place. He sees destruction.

[5 : 56] And pain. We don't even need to look outside. We can look inside. And see the own brokenness. Pain. Sin. And disappointment. In our own life. And that tension. Is something.

That is great. In most people's lives. And not all people's lives. Because it's not just a question of theology. It's part of the human experience. To have these deeply held beliefs. Yet our day-to-day experience.

Of what life can be like. And that great tension. Is something. That we all find ourselves in. And if you've been. A Christian. Any length of time. Then. That'll be. Something you've probably already experienced.

And if not. Then as I said. It will probably come to either you. Or the people around about you. But this isn't just a tension for us. It was a tension. For all the people. In the scriptures.

This tension is spoken about. A lot in the scriptures. And Habakkuk is one of the books. That engages. That tension. It's the tension. Of the idea. That God. And the way he is in life.

[6 : 51] Is not always the way. The experience. Of who they know him to be. So how does Habakkuk arrive. At this conclusion. How does he. Come to a place. Where he can experience life.

Like this. Yet say these words. Of who he knows God's to be. That's what we're going to think about. This morning. So I'm going to pray. And then we've got three simple points. That we're going to go through. Which are in the sheet.

If you want to follow. Father I pray. That as we look. To Habakkuk. As an example. This morning. You'd help us. Not to.

Just hear words. That are. Detached from our lives. But words of hope. Words that help us. Look into the reality of life. Yet at the same time. Look to you. To say something new.

To say something true. So I pray. Father. That you would speak to each one of us. This morning. Of your power. And your character. I ask that in Jesus name. Amen. So our first point this morning.

[7 : 47] Is this point called reality. Which is called the practice of honesty. So we're going to follow through. These three points of reality. Grief. And hope. Which I think is a pattern. Habakkuk himself goes through.

And I think it's a pattern. You actually see in a lot. Of the Old Testament. Prophets. So Habakkuk is saying. There's no fig trees. There's no grapes. There's no oil. There's no cows.

Now he's not just listing luxury items. He's essentially saying. The sources of food and energy. Are gone. There's absolutely nothing left. This is starvation.

He is describing. This is a very hard. And struggling. Desolate reality. He is talking about here. In these verses. Now Habakkuk lived in the final days.

Of Judah. The southern kingdom of Israel. And he was. Very aware. Of the rising threat. Of the Babylonian empire. On the horizon. And the Babylonians.

[8 : 41] Were absolutely ruthless. These were not exactly. You know. Sometimes the way. These things are portrayed in films. They were brutal. Known for their violence. Their slavery. And their sexual abuse.

And this was the empire. That was on the horizon. And they were coming. And Habakkuk was aware of that. But as if threat. Of hostile takeover. Wasn't bad enough. Things in the promised land. That weren't exactly great. Either. In the face. Of continued. Prophetic warnings. From God. Idolatry. Injustice. And wrongdoing. Are widespread.

Throughout Judah. This isn't just like. Little pockets. Of bad behavior. This is like. The culture. Of the nation. And one of the roles. The prophets. Were to do. Was they were sent.

By God. To help. Define reality. They said things. For how they were. They said things. For how God. Saw them. They would expose. Sin. Hypocrisy. And injustice. That the people of God.

[9 : 35] Were regularly committing. Particularly their idolatry. And oppression. Of the poor. And the prophets. Were sent by God. As an act of love. And warning. To kind of. Break into their reality.

And say. Do you not see. What is happening. Look. Pay attention. To what's going on. Do you not see. How far. You've strayed. So that they may. In grief. And repentance. Return. And be.

The nation. They were designed to be. A light to the world. Habakkuk's job. Would have been. To speak this reality. To the people. And lead them back. To God. If they would listen. This is the practice.

Of honesty. Is like. Speaking reality. I don't know. When you hear the word prophet. You might think of. Some sort of fortune teller. Or soothsayer. But the prophets. Of the Old Testament. They had. A direct line to God. And he was like.

This is what reality is like. And you're missing it. You're not paying attention. And the more often than not. For most of us. I know for myself. That we don't actually like. To face reality.

[10 : 29] That's why I've put it red. This is going to be a traffic light. By the end of this. We like to stop a reality. We don't really want to go any further. Because reality is often very difficult. Usually leaves us vulnerable. And exposed.

It usually leaves us in a place of pain. And so we have different options. Of when we're faced with reality. One of the biggest ones. I think I see around about me. In my own heart. Is cynicism. I just go to cynicism. Reality is a good defense.

Against cynicism. I might even call it being a realist. But essentially. It's the antithesis sometimes. Of being people of hope. Don't expect too much. And then you won't be disappointed. The problem is.

With you live that mantra. Any length of time. Is you end up becoming disappointed. Consistently. It's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. And the challenge with that as well. Is how do you fit God. Into the heart of a cynic.

You have to continually. Depower God. As some sort of. Absentee landlord. To fit the narrative. Of what you're seeing. Around about you. Well this Habakkuk. Could have just said. Well that's the way things are.

[11 : 25] And people are just like that. End of book. But he doesn't do that. He could have gone into nihilism. Well. Nothing really matters anyway. You shouldn't really care. You see the rest.

The writer of Ecclesiastes. Wrestle with this idea of. Well it's all meaningless anyway. So what's the point in caring. Again the challenge of that. Is apart from it. Leading to another form of hard heartedness. Is most people do deeply care.

And to try and live a life where you don't care. Doesn't really work either. And we can have like a. I think a kind of Christian version of this. A certain kind of. Low level. Pharisaical attitude to the world.

Where. Well it's all going to burn anyway. So who cares. And where's the room for the transformation heart of God. And the lives and the beauty of the world. And where are they all ahead. You have to kind of get rid of that as well.

And the character of God. Or we could just go for plain. Good old fashioned. Denial. Just stick your head in the sand. And pretend it's not happening. Denial is one of the most tempting things to go to.

[12 : 21] When we are presented. With a difficult reality. We have an entire economy. Built on helping us. Engage with denial well. In the unhelpful sense. You don't like something.

Don't listen. You want something. Just go buy it. You feel a certain way. Just do it. But just help this thing. Terminate in the immediacy. We can deny reality in many ways.

Whether it be in the most. More obvious things. We see around the butlers in culture. Or in the kind of day to day stuff. I see in my life all the time. Like when work is difficult. And I think the reality of that is coming up.

I just distract myself with an online life. Or you escape into fantasy. Or when family life is hard. You turn to work and busyness. To give yourself a purpose. And a framework for meaning. When we feel shame about the reality. Of who we experience ourselves to be. So we run a hundred miles in the other direction. Pretending to be somebody we are not. In order to have. No community with God.

[13:18] And no community with one another. But this is the kind of prophet Malachi's denouncement of the people. When they argue with God in his book. They're just ignoring reality.

Malachi records this argument with the people. Where the people are literally saying to God. We're not doing anything wrong. And God's like you're not looking at reality. Habakkuk's job would be coming in to define reality.

And it's not pleasant. Jesus in Matthew 23. In his famous woes to the Pharisees. Where he's kind of deconstructing their blindness. Of in their absolute pursuit of holiness and control.

They are crushing people around about them. He calls them blind. You're not looking at reality.

However when we look at the life of Habakkuk. We have something quite unique about who he is. Because unlike the other prophets.

Habakkuk doesn't accuse Israel. Or even speak to the people on God's behalf. Instead all his words are addressed directly to God himself. The book of Habakkuk tells us about Habakkuk's own personal struggle.

[14:20] To believe that God is good. When there's so much tragedy and pain and injustice. And the world don't devote him. He sees reality. Habakkuk can see it. That's his job to speak it. And it's hard for him as well.

But instead of cynicism. Instead of nihilism or denial. And there's hundreds of other options. We love sentimentality. We can hide in that too. We can hide in naivety. He pursues maybe something that might feel a bit counterintuitive.

He heads into grief. Which is our second point. Practice of lament. So many of Habakkuk's words in his book. Are actually poems of lament.

And in lament the poet draws God's attention to the suffering and injustice in the world. Or the pain of how they're experiencing life. And then asks God to do something about it.

So in despair. Habakkuk opens up his heart to God about the reality in front of him in chapter 1 verses 1 to 4. Where he says. How long oh Lord must I call for help.

[15:17] But you do not listen. Or cry out to you violence. But you do not save. 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. Therefore the law is paralyzed and justice never prevails. The wicked him in the righteous.

So that justice is perverted. So Habakkuk has this complaint right to God right off the bat. Of that life in Israel is horrible. The Torah is neglected.

Resulting in violence and injustice everywhere. And all of this is being tolerated by Israel's corrupt leaders. There's even corruption in the very legal systems that were designed to protect the nation from corruption itself.

And the impact of the righteous who are living there feels like it's been wiped out by the actions of the wicked. Habakkuk protests this contradiction he sees.

[16:14] He engages with the tension of who he knows God to be and the reality on the ground. Why does God put up with it? That's essentially Habakkuk's question. Why is God seemingly inactive in the face of all this?

And this is a pain. Look at this language. This isn't just him stating some facts and then saying what are you going to do about it. It's a pained prayer. And then all of a sudden God responds. And he says he's very aware of the corruption.

And he's actually going to do something about it. He's going to respond and will intervene. And he says in verse 5 to 6. This is God speaking to Habakkuk. Look at the nations and watch. And be utterly amazed.

I'm going to do something in your days that you would not believe. Even if you were told. I'm raising up the Babylonians. That ruthless and impetuous people. Who sweep across the whole earth to

seize dwellings not their own.

God essentially says to Habakkuk. Don't worry. I'm going to send the Babylonians to fix this. Now Habakkuk understandably has a bit of a problem with this answer. Because he's like the Babylonians. They're worse than we are.

[17:18] And he offers a second complaint. Which a lot of the rest of chapter 1 is about. Where he describes what the Babylonians are like. They're more corrupt. More violent. They deify their own power and military.

They treat humans like animals. They gather people up like fish. They devour nations and people groups to build their empire. And that is God's answer to them. Don't worry. I'm sending the Babylonians. So naturally Habakkuk complains again.

With essentially a bit of a what. What on earth are you up to? And we're not maybe used to the prophets speaking back to God like this. We might imagine them with their spiritual lives in order. They speak with grand gravitas. Making these proclamations about who God is. And what he's like. But the book of Habakkuk kicks off with this kind of unfiltered. Habakkuk bringing the reality. He sees in front of him. And in pain saying. Here's what's going on. Here's how I perceive things. What are you up to? This is a prayer of protest. Of impatience. Of raw emotion. Habakkuk is wrestling with how to relate to God.

[18:20] In the midst of his reality. This is what lament is. This is the bringing of our lives. Into engagement with God. Because we know he is there. And he wants to listen. The practice of lament.

Helps us to live in that kind of liminal tension. Between faith and doubt. Between hope and despair. Between expectation and frustration. It helps us to be present. But not just to stay still.

But to kind of move forward at the same time. And the scriptures are full of prayers of lament.

There's a book called Lamentations. Over two-thirds of the Psalms are prayers of lament.

They're all over the place. And it's all these disillusionment and questions and feelings. That are directed towards God. Not with a posture of whining. But actually it's called worship. Here in honesty is what's going on in my heart and in my mind.

And I bring it before you. I bring my whole experience before you. Now usually, I don't know what you're like. But I'm definitely like this. When something difficult comes into my life.

[19:18] The prayer mode I go into is request mode. I just ask for things. Could you do this? Could you fix this? Could you stop this? Now the prayers of lamentation have requests in them. But primarily, the assumption that people who are lamenting have is that God already knows what's happening.

So we don't need to tell them that. Instead of what the lamentations, the lament prayers show is that here's how we're experiencing life.

Which is quite different from the assumptions that I can have when I'm just requesting. Which God already knows what's happening. He already knows how I feel. So what I need to do is to tell him what to do.

That's my job. You do this, this, and this. Or I might go the other end of the spectrum and just think, Well, God doesn't really care what's happening anyway. So there's no point talking to him in the first place. Prayers of lament do neither of those things.

They have this holding that God is just and he will know what to do. But I need to bring before him how I am experiencing what this is like. To process this with God.

[20:20] To talk to God about it. To show him my questions. To show him my heart. Because God cares. Because of who he knows God to be. Which we'll come on to in a moment.

As I said, there's plenty of biblical prayers. You can look up some of the prayers of lament yourself. If this is not a natural thing for you to do, I'd encourage you to just go and find some psalms of lament. And use them as prayers for yourself.

See how the author's right. See where it takes them. And see how it brings them to God. But we don't just have prayers of lament for external stuff. We have prayers of lament about internal stuff as well.

So a passage I often return to is, I'm not sure that it actually qualifies as a prayer of lament.

Somebody can correct me after. But I use it as one. Is Romans 7.

Where it's more about Paul's internal reality. So we can look at the world and feel pain and the injustice. But we can also look inside and feel like, see the sin and brokenness and disappointment

in our own lives.

[21 : 15] Of who we thought we should be. Versus of who we want to be. And who we experience ourselves to be. And that's the famous passage where Paul essentially says, look, the things I want to do, I don't do.

And the things I don't want to do, I end up doing them too. And he kind of prays. I read it, I use it as a prayer in Romans 7, 22, 25. Where he says, for in my inner being, I delight in God's law.

But I see another law at work in me. Waging war against the law of my mind. And making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death.

Thanks be to God who delivers me through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So when I think in my own life where I thought life was headed or even what it means to be a Christian.

I find myself constantly confronted with desires and expectations that aren't in line with what I know what it means to fully pursue and live faithfully for Jesus. Especially for me seeking to continue to what it means to live life singly, faithfully.

[22 : 20] I read Paul's prayers and relate to how he engages with the tension. But because it exists, I'm not supposed to hide this from God or see it as a failure, but to bring it to him. And arrive at a similar conclusion that he does.

What am I supposed to do with this? Thanks be to God. If he was to hide it from God or other people, then where does it go? And so for Paul and for us and for Habakkuk, this form of engagement with God leads to our final point, which is hope.

The practice of rejoicing. So God answers Habakkuk again. He says to Habakkuk at the start of chapter 2 to get out some tablets and write down what he sees and hears.

So he is given this vision about an appointed time in the future. And he is told that while this time might be slow in arriving, it will eventually come. And what is this vision? That God will bring down the Babylonians.

That he will enact his justice there. God actually says that the violence and oppressions of the nations creates this kind of never-ending cycle of violence. And revenge.

[23 : 23] And that God is actually going to use that cycle against the nations themselves. And the fact that God might use for a time a corrupt nation like Babylon does not mean he endorses what they do.

He says he will hold all nations to account to his justice. So Babylon will fall just like any other nation acts like them. And how do they act? Well, just briefly in chapter 2, you get these five woes. Which again is language Jesus uses later. Where God describes these types of nations. The first and second woe is in regard to economic practices. Of how wealthy people will charge ridiculous interest rates just to keep people in debt.

So that they can build their wealth through crooked means. The third critique is of slave labor. Of treating humans like animals and threatening them with violence if they don't produce. The fourth woe is about the abuse of particularly of alcohol of irresponsible leaders.

Of while the people are suffering under their bad leadership. They are partying and wasting their money on sex and booze. The fifth woe is about the engine of the whole thing.

[24 : 27] Which is their idolatry. That drives their nation. They have made money and power and national security into their gods. Offering allegiance to these things. And to the gods they represent at all costs.

Now if you hear those critiques and think, well they sound familiar. I think that's part of the point. Is that whilst this is about Babylon. These things are not unique to Babylon. Given the human condition.

Without God. Most nations become a version of Babylon. Babylon. And so God's answer to Habakkuk is God's answer to anyone. Who finds himself living to any generation.

In a world full of Babylon. But chapter 3 goes further. It doesn't just say, well I'll deal with Babylon. I'll deal with all the bad nations. He goes on to talk about a bigger justice to come. And he uses Exodus language.

What follows in the poem of chapter 3. Is a powerful and terrifying appearance of God. Through the clouds, fire, earthquakes. Things the people of God will recognize. God has done this before.

[25 : 27] It's very similar to the opening poems of Micah and Nahum. As well as how God appeared to the people in Mount Sinai. Habakkuk is making the point. That when the creator shows

up to deal with evil.

It will get everybody's attention. And actually God has faithfully acted like this in the past before. So Habakkuk's hope. Isn't out of nowhere. Is as he engages with God. He looks to the bigger promise of God's justice to come.

He also looks to the power God has demonstrated in the past. But Habakkuk's hope is also based on who God is. Verses 18 to 19 that we just read.

Habakkuk actually uses three different names for God. So another reading of this would be. I will rejoice in Jehovah. I will be joyful in Elohim my savior.

Adonai. Jehovah is my strength. So he calls God these rich terms that the people of God have used for generations. About who he is and what he is like.

[26 : 26] Jehovah. The existing one. Always present. Regardless of what is happening. He is always present. Elohim. The supreme one. There's nobody greater. And he actually.

The supreme one. Holds our salvation. Meaning everything else in comparison. While hard. Is temporary. And Adonai. Sovereign. Always full of power. Always in control.

Is the source of his strength. And this power of engaging with reality. Engaging with God. And what it is like. And the question that this brings up. Leads him to continue to engage with God.

And who God is. And what he is like. And it says it gives him this hope. Like hope of a deer. And this made me think of. I don't know if this will work. Are you going to stick that up Matt?

From planet earth too. This should be a video. I'm just going to carry on talking. And hopefully it will work. That's just a slide of some rocks. Anyway. I don't know if. It doesn't work. It's working. So how many of you saw planet earth too.

[27 : 24] Where you saw the baby ibexes. Running around the mountaintops. And like you look at them. And you think. That should not work. That should defy the laws of physics. These things are going to drop and die. And you might think that.

And actually in the show. It is talking about how they're in danger. He says. I have this new hope. That gives me feet like a deer. And to that. To the world round about us.

That hope can look a bit like this. It looks dangerous. It looks perilous. It looks ridiculous. But actually because of who they. I'm not talking about these. Ibexes right now. But for us. There's a similar thing about like. You might think.

I'm not going nowhere near that life. Because it will fall. And actually there's something about the way. They know the reality. And that we are told a different reality. It allows us to operate differently. It allows us to have hope in this world today.

These promises are what enable Habakkuk. To end the book with hopeful praise. Even if the world has fallen apart. And there's food shortages. Drought, war, whatever. He will choose to take the promises of God.

[28 : 22] And just quickly. As we end. This isn't just something for the Old Testament. For us. As the people of God. Under a new relationship. And a new covenant with Christ. This is even more tangible.

So as I said in chapter 2. In verses 8 to 15. Habakkuk describes the future defeat of the evil. And he uses Exodus language. He talks about a future Exodus to come. Just like God came as a warrior to split the sea.

He's going to take down Pharaoh. And Babylon. And every kind of archetype like that. The Exodus story of the past. Has become an image of a future Exodus. God will perform. He will once again defeat evil.

And bring down the Pharaohs and Babylonians of the world. Bringing justice to all people. And rescuing the oppressed. And he says in verse 13. Come. God will come out to deliver his people. And save his anointed one. And we know the anointed one. Which is a reference to the line of King David. We know that to be Jesus. And maybe thinking like Luke chapter 9. You have the beautiful miraculous picture of Jesus at the transfiguration.

[29 : 23] Where he's with Elijah and Moses and God. And they are talking to Jesus. And the disciples are kind of looking on baffled. And it says in verse 30. The two men. Moses and Elijah. Appeared in glorious splendor.

Talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure. Which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. And that word departure. Is the word Exodus. They're talking to Jesus about the future Exodus.

He will achieve in Jerusalem. That his journey towards Jerusalem. Will bring about this very thing. That Habakkuk is looking forward to. And Jesus actually lived this pattern of reality. Grief and hope. In his life. He walked among the reality of people's lives. Engaging fully with their pain. And sin. And brokenness. And in the religious and political systems. That were crushing them. In grief. He lamented over Jerusalem. And he mourned at the tomb of Lazarus. Yet. He did not let those things define reality. In hope he moved forward. Healing.

[30 : 22] Forgiving. And transforming. And even on the cross. Jesus is painfully aware. About the reality of his life. Of where he's headed. In the garden. He protested. And asked God to take the pain away.

On the cross. He cries out in lament. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? Yet why does he do it? Hebrews tells us. For the joy that was set before him.

He endured the cross. Despising the shame. And sent it down at the right hand. Of the throne of God. We have a God. Who actually knows what this is like. This is not a God who just panders to our reality.

But lived through full reality. Full grief. And full hope. And invites us into it. And actually. Every time Habakkuk complains. God replies.

It gives. This back and forth structure. It gives us a wonderful picture. Of what engaging with God. In real conversation. Is like. He appreciates that we struggle. He graciously listens. And engages with our questions.

[31 : 18] And complaints. And so by the end of the book. Habakkuk. Habakkuk isn't just given a pithy sentence. About well. Things might be bad. But you know. Cross your fingers. And hope for the best. He is a shining example.

Of how the righteous live. The righteous. Sorry. Live by faith. He recognizes fully. Just how dark. And chaotic. The world can be. But he also sees. How this invites us.

Into our journey of faith. Trusting that God. Loves the world. More than we can imagine. And that he will. One day. Deal with evil. And has already done that. On the cross. I'm going to pray. And then the band will come back up.

Father we thank you. That as we look to your son. As we look to the. Triumph of the cross. And the triumph of the resurrected. Of the empty tomb. That while we can experience pain.

Externally and internally. In our life now. You give us hope. That is rooted in your character. Rooted in your work. And as a promise held. In eternity. For all people.

[32 : 17] So would you help us to walk. In that tension. In our lives. And hold it out. As a message of hope. For others. That's that in Jesus name. Amen.