

—HABAKKUK: LESSON THREE—

Day One

☀ Please read Habakkuk 3:1-4

This past July my family and I were camping at Balch Park, and it was one of the best camping trips we'd ever been on. The kids (11, 9, turned-7-while-camping) had really matured and hit a good stride. The summer had seemed to knit us closer and I was to the point where I could say that I really liked all of my kids (you know it, moms- you always love them, but sometimes it's hard to like them when they whine, fight, are teething, roll their eyes at you...).

The kids had gone to bed and my husband and I watched the fire die down. We crept into the tent and I lay down, praying peacefully as I got cozy in my sleeping bag. I suddenly found myself sitting straight up, eyes wide open in our pitch-black tent with the name "Valley Oaks" (a local state-funded charter school where the parent teaches the curriculum at home with the help of a resource teacher) pulled from the back of my mind's filing system to the very front, almost popping out from my forehead. We were set on our oldest attending Valley Oaks for high school, but that was in 2 years, so I began to process what only God could have made so prominent in my mind. I whispered, "Jeff...are you awake?" We were a part of an amazing public school community and our family was so well invested and taken care of there. We talked through what changes this would mean for our family, and, as drowsiness set in, we both agreed that we would look in to Valley Oaks as soon as we got cell phone reception.

Bright and early Monday morning, I called Valley Oaks, feeling a bit silly because I really didn't know what I was calling about. I let the secretary know about our plan in two years and our current situation, and she told me that there was an orientation with the principal in an hour and a half. Could I make it? Yes! I needed information, and a door was opened. We were told right away that the program was full, but I was fine with that because we had a school already. As I sat through the orientation, my heart had so much peace and there was a sweet thrill there in regards to what my children would get to experience and how our family would function in this program. Applications were available, so I took three. We were urged to turn them in fully completed by 4p Friday for any chances getting in. I spent Monday afternoon filling them all out, and we decided to keep walking in faith where we saw a path. All I could put on the line under

“Why are you choosing to homeschool?” was “God is prompting us, so we are obediently following.” I turned the applications in Tuesday morning at 8a and was reminded again that they were full. Wednesday afternoon, the Valley Oaks principal called, letting me know that all three of our children could attend.

I took inventory of what God had put in my hands to be a steward of: ministries, school events, home responsibilities. I would need to shift my focus onto this new season. I found it easy to accept that I’d need to put some things in to different hands, AND THAT IS **NOT** ME. I am a Type-A control freak and I will juggle as many things as are thrown at me. Not this time, and I’m ok with it. That is *God*, and all I can do is give God glory for it all and trust that this whole adventure that started with an unexpected tent talk and took less than a week to be revealed is for our good.

Some of you have had this sort of a revelation/unfolding/event where God did a work and you saw it through. Some of you (myself included) have not had resolution or the answer that you seek. That situation- however tough the trial is- is for God’s glory and your good.

- What does Romans 8:28 tell us? _____

We’re not guaranteed that everything will smooth over, but **GOD WORKS FOR THE GOOD IN ALL, THROUGH ALL, ALL FOR HIS GLORY.**

- Write out John 16:33 _____

Throughout the passages in John, Jesus is telling His disciples that He IS God, and He is doing this so that they can fully understand that:

- God sent Him and God has always known, seen, and loved them
- Jesus was there to warn them and teach them in love and truth, making a way for all to come to salvation
- Jesus would return to God, but would not leave them alone (Holy Spirit)

Jesus' words here show how fully enveloped we are in God's love. He has said these things so that we can find peace in Him. WE WILL HAVE TRIALS. WE WILL HAVE SORROW. But take heart... Jesus has overcome. God IS at work.

The trial and sorrow of Babylon was coming. God had warned Judah to repent of their sins, and now the consequence had been laid out. God is just, and His people would come under the enemy's authority. However, God reminded Habakkuk that Babylon would also face consequences. This is God's justice, and Habakkuk trusted in it. God would work everything for good, even through a hard time. God never changes, and He is always worthy to be praised, even in the storm. We know this about our Father.

“ I know your reputation, LORD, and I am amazed at what you have done.”
Habakkuk 3:2



What do you know of God? What amazes you about Him? _____

Does He change who He is when times are tough? _____ when times are good? _____

You may have noticed the term “according to the shigionoth” or “on shigionoth” at the beginning of the chapter. This word is only mentioned here and in Psalm 7, so scholars believe that it describes a poem or passage set to orchestra/music, most likely with a very strong emotional tone. Habakkuk has been troubled, in a state of wondering, and worried. He has waited and trusted, watched and listened, and his response isn't a song with the lyrics “everything is amazing” followed by jazz hands; it is a songful pouring out of his heart in worship. Habakkuk has spoken his feelings, and he now focuses on the truths of who God is. “God's glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth. His splendor like the sunrise; rays flashed from His hand, where His power was hidden. (verses 3-4).”

How else is the appearance of God and His powerful abilities described in:

- Job 37:15-16 _____

- Psalm 19:1 _____

- Psalm 104:24-30 _____

- Isaiah 43:20-21 _____

- Revelation 4:2-5 _____

One cannot read these verses and still allow worry, doubt, fear, or defeat to dominate their hearts. How powerful are these illustrations about the majesty of our Father and King?!

Worship seems to sweep away our questions and fears and replace them with an awareness of GOD.

Think of a song or song lyric seems to just penetrate your heart every time you hear it. What line, verse, or chorus seems to stir a spirit of awe in you?

Read over the verses and accounts of today's lesson, and be intentional today about having a worshipful spirit.



Day Two

☀ Please read Habakkuk 3:5-15 and keep it earmarked :)

God's people were accustomed to warfare and the changing of power. God had promised His people a nation and He would keep His word, but His people would realize how they needed to depend on God and remain righteous. There are consequences to sin, but God's measure of justice and grace are so perfectly balanced that I don't think we can ever wrap our human minds around it.

☀ Please turn to Ezekiel 18, which is titled "The Justice of a Righteous God" in my Bible.

- Who are God's to judge according to verse 4? _____
- What happens to those who sin? _____

Death is an eternal separation from God. How sweet it is that God did not turn His back on us in our wretched state, and that He doesn't give up on us daily!

- Please read the story told in verses 5-18. A righteous man will be called "righteous" because of his own actions, not the actions of his family. We live in a world that wants everybody to be happy, and the word "tolerance" has made sin a gray area. The Bible very clearly distinguishes between what is right and what is sin. We are not to tolerate sin, nor are we to credit somebody with a good name because his family has a good name, nor should we condemn a person because of their family's reputation.
- Summarize what God is saying in verse 23: _____

God doesn't take pleasure in seeing His creation do wicked things. I think this passage of Scripture is beautiful because we see God as a Father and as a Righteous Judge; the One who has the ultimate authority and also has the heart for His workmanship. God is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14), and He has the right to be. He created every minute detail with a plan, and when that plan is disregarded, He holds the position of calling it out. And, why not? I want to know that I did wrong so that I can make it better and get the most out of what God has for me.

- In verse 25, God calls Jerusalem out about all their whining. What does He say that shows His justice?

- Please finish off the chapter to verse 32. I can hear a stern, fatherly voice with a desire for reconciliation- not condemnation- throughout this whole chapter, can't you? What is the gracious last line of the chapter (end of verse 32)?

God wants us to have life = life with Him = eternal life, abundantly. Knowing this about our Father, we can read Habakkuk 3:5-15 with a fresh perspective. God warns and instructs us to follow His decrees, and yet we fail Him so often. When we recall His mighty feats of the past, humility overcomes us.

Habakkuk refers to many aspects of who God is and how He takes care of us in these next few verses:

- Verse 5: God has supreme power over all. When we read the account of Moses in Egypt, we read of God sending forth disease and hardships to display His power over nature (Exodus 7-11). God was preparing a way for His people to be led out of slavery and onward to the Promised Land, and God would take care of His people still.
- Verse 6: God, being Creator, measures out the land and divides it as He sees fit. His purpose will be done throughout every inch. Deuteronomy 32:8-9 says, "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel. For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance." There is comfort in knowing that, from His first interactions with Abraham, God has always had a place for His people.
- Verse 7: The name of God and the power of His reputation make the enemy troubled. Cush had overtaken Israel, but God raised up a deliverer and

brought peace (Judges 3:7-10). In Judges 7, God weeded down Gideon's army from 32,000 men to 300, and God showed off by defeating the Midianites.

The list goes on and on! God stopped the waters (v.8) of the Jordan River (Joshua 3) and the Red Sea (Exodus 14), Joshua and the sun standing still (v.11, story in Joshua 10)... AMAZING!

You and I have selective memory. We choose to recall things by certain details. When you are in conflict, do you remember your offenses or the other person's more clearly? Do you remember the bumpy road or the beautiful view at the end of it? In our spiritual life, we are all guilty of at some point forfeiting humility and forgetting that we were once without hope. We ignore salvation through Jesus and we try to base our righteousness on our good merits because of how it makes us look. We forget that tough time when we thought God had given up on us, but He was working behind the scenes. We forget promises we made to one another.

God instructs us in His Word to remember HIM and who He is. What do the following verses instruct us to do?

Deuteronomy 4:1-9 (what does 9 say?)-

Deuteronomy 6:12-

Psalms 105:5-7-

Turn to I Samuel 7. Israel had been in a state of rebellion but had now turned back to the Lord. They clean up their act with the help of Samuel and they defeat the Philistines. What does Samuel do in verse 12 to commemorate the event?

Ebenezer means “stone of help.” Every time an Israelite saw the stone that Samuel placed to mark the spot where God showed up mightily, they were encouraged.

I think we need more Ebenezers along the paths of our lives; wouldn’t you agree? Many of you have them around you, but you may not identify them as a “stone of help.” CalTrans would probably get upset if we set stones on the side of 178, but we *do* have them around us! For some of us, it’s a calendar date that is alive in our hearts (rededication, confession of faith, anniversary of a God Work in your life). Many keep prayer journals and can turn back 5 years and check off answered prayers. Is there a verse that you have taped to your mirror because of its spiritual significance to your life? That’s an Ebenezer. Maybe you received words of encouragement that changed your life or aided in your start onto a tough road, or perseverance to continue down it.

As you end today, what “stone of help” is the Spirit revealing that you need to revisit? We are blessed to have God’s Word as a record of His mighty hand in our lives, but He intimately has shown Himself and worked in you. You are a part of the Story, so recall that you have overcome many things in your life in His Name. Thank God for your Ebenezer: _____



Day Three

 Please read Habakkuk 3:16-18

Habakkuk 3:16: “When I _____ this message, my body trembled...”

Habakkuk had heard of all that God had done for His people with His righteous right hand. The stories had been passed down through generations. Here he had recalled those while faced with a hard truth, and he trembled. He was at a loss for

words. He recognized the weakness that is our mortal design as he remembered God's sovereign hand throughout history.

Here we find Habakkuk in a state of being that only a believer saved by grace can experience: being in utter trembling at God's awe and fierce might, and being in triumphant jubilee that *this is OUR GOD*. We tremble here on earth because of the darkness that is evident all around us, but we have the special blessing of being able to anticipate in spirit the triumph of Jesus' return and His reign that will bring in His Forever Kingdom. PRAISE HIM!

- Write out Psalm 119:120 _____

Let's keep going with Habakkuk's response to all that God has allowed him to see, hear, and feel. When does Habakkuk say he will rest (v.16)?

Can to rest in a day of trouble? Can you rest knowing that a day of trouble is coming? Sister, you and I have this rest! The Babylonians are coming, but God what is God ultimately going to do in this situation (the rest of verse 16)?

God is on the move. When judgment comes (and God promises it will), His children will be under His protection and will be at rest under His wing (Psalm 91:4).

 What wisdom do you gather from what these verses say about rest?

- I Kings 8:56-61 _____

- Psalm 37:7 _____

- Psalm 62:1-6 _____

We are afforded rest in Christ. Take a big sigh of relief and let that truth take root.

Habakkuk summarizes his whole experience with God in verses 17 and 18. Read them again.

I love this portion of commentary that I came across while studying for this lesson. It's from studylight.org (Adam Clarke Commentary):

“These two verses give the finest display of resignation and confidence that I have ever met with. He [Habakkuk] saw that evil was at hand, and unavoidable, he submitted to the dispensation of God, whose Spirit enabled him to paint it in all its calamitous circumstances.

He knew that God was merciful and gracious. He trusted to His promise, though all appearances were against its fulfillment; for he knew that the word of Jehovah could not fail, and therefore his confidence is unshaken.

No paraphrase can add any thing to this hymn, which is full of inexpressible dignity and elegance, leaving even its unparalleled piety out of the question.”

- In verse 17, what is Habakkuk implying could happen?

The kingdom of Judah could very well suffer a loss of harvests because of war time. Property owners could lose land and flocks. Soon the people would be led away in exile to Babylon, leaving few to tend to fields for the profit of the Babylonians. Babylonians could come in and take all of the horses for their cavalry. Despite no guarantee of food, land, life, Habakkuk says what (v.18)?

Are we to put our hope in vine and flock, which can change, be depleted, and will not always satisfy us? We put our hope in God.

Can you today practice resignation? Can you retire from your post of control and anxiety over what is or is to come? Can you accept- in trembling- that things will get worse in the world, but be patient in God's triumphant timing because He will overcome? Can you confidently sink your feet into the firm foundation of God's covenant with us? Stand up, hands up, and praise Him today!

"For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With His love, He will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

Zephaniah 3:17



Day Four

 Please read Habakkuk 3:19

Habakkuk is ending his encounter with God by intimately focusing on who God is to him. Let's take a look at the three concepts Habakkuk mentions:

*** "The Lord is my strength"**

Habakkuk knew that Babylon would take Judah over. Habakkuk acknowledged that neither field nor flock could satisfy. You may be in a place where a Babylon seems to be at your outer walls, and you feel weakened.

- Philippians 4:13 _____

You can face it and overcome with Christ.

- Deuteronomy 20:4 _____

Where is God? Who does He fight for? Take heart.

- Isaiah 41:10 _____

He is YOUR God, He is with you, will strengthen, help, and uphold you.

- Psalm 31:24 _____

As Habakkuk did, we must watch and wait for God because He is moving.

- In what way do you need God to be your strength today?

✦ “He makes my feet like the feet of a deer”

Habakkuk could have given the imagery of feeling enclosed and bound by the message of God, but he instead speaks of God giving him feet of a deer.

- How would you describe the movements of a deer? _____

A deer seems to have spring-loaded hooves! They leap so gracefully and elegantly. They are sure-footed and seem to know the terrain that they are running over. A deer is swift and quick to set out when it senses the call to. These are the feet that God has equipped us for with what He has set out down our own unique paths. In difficult times, God does not shut us down and cause us to be immovable; on the contrary, He prepares us for action.

- According to Ephesians 6:15, what are you and I to do with our feet? _____

We are to prepare our feet to go wherever we are called to 1) preach the Good News and 2) walk obediently where God calls us, when He calls us.

And how are we to know that where we are running is sure?

- Psalm 16:9 _____

- Psalm 37:23 _____

Trust that the One directing you has the right directions for you.

✦ **“He will make me walk on high hills”**

God will exalt His people after troublesome times. We claim victory in His Name, which sets us above everything! From up high you can see for miles. Worries seem to fade, and an awe sets in for how big the world really is when you get outside the walls of your small day-to-day life cubicle.

“For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, The LORD God of hosts is His name.” Amos 4:13

- Who treads on the high places? _____ The Lord Himself will exalt us to His places when we humble ourselves to His will and trust in Him through it all.

"Blessed are you, O Israel; who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, Who is the shield of your help and the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their high places." Deuteronomy 33:29

Where are our enemies? _____ Where are we? _____

*For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.”
Psalm 27:5*

God will set us in the secret places. Shelter. Hidden away. Safe. Up High.

Why does it seem like God doesn't answer prayer sometimes? Why does evil infiltrate? We are all going to ask these questions at some point, and we can either withdraw from God in upset or press in to Him. We may not understand the answer, but our responsibility is to walk by faith and trust in God to do His good work in it all.

Develop a faith like Habakkuk: call out to God, listen and take heed, recall His past works in your life, accept through trust the work God is doing, and recommit yourself to joy in Him. Steady your heart with this thought: When all is gone around us, the earth has crumbled, destruction's path wide and charred, the world we know broken down... God is not gone. He is coming, and where He is, we will be. Wait and watch. Tremble in the triumph of our blessed Savior!

