



Is This My Father's World?

Living By Faith in an Unjust World

Christ Redeemer Church
Sermon Series Study Guide
Spring 2020

Special thanks to Anna-Kaye Schulte for the sermon series artwork!

© 2020 by Christ Redeemer Church

Scripture quotations: Scriptures taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, (NIV®), Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2010 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. Scriptures taken from the New American Standard Bible®(NASB®), copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

INTRODUCTION

“O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

~Habakkuk 1:2-4 (ESV)

The Prophet Habakkuk: An Introduction

Where is God? What is He doing in the world? Does He care about what is going on? These questions come naturally to people living in a world where injustice seems to be the rule rather than the exception. In times of disorientation, we may ask, “Is this really my Father’s world?”

However, many Christians shy away from asking these questions. We may fear provoking God, be concerned about the opinions of others, or simply not know what, if any, answer we may find. As a result, we often struggle to answer the question: “How can I live well in this broken world? What does God expect from me?”

Habakkuk was a prophet who was likewise concerned about injustice. After years of revival and reformation under King Josiah in Judah, the people had once again turned away from God, ceased to listen to his law, and were perpetrating all kinds of evil against one another. The international news was not encouraging either; nations like Babylon threatened the security of Habakkuk’s people without offering any hope of moral and spiritual renewal.

In this context, Habakkuk asked hard questions, confident that God would hear and respond graciously. He modeled what it looks like to ask the questions we fear and to be vulnerable before God. He was not afraid to ask, and he was not afraid to listen.

Famously, God tells Habakkuk that “but the righteous shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). While we may continue to wonder about the details of God’s plans, we can be confident of his intentions. God will accomplish several goals that we can scarcely imagine: showing his glory in the world, ending injustice, and caring for his people. God’s purposes may be difficult to see, but we do live in our Father’s world. We can trust him.

The Purpose of this Study Guide

This study guide is intended to be a simple way to reflect on the sermon passages week by week. We want to grow in our daily discipline of pursuing God in Scripture and in prayer. The daily discipline that this study guide represents will be a tangible way to allow the “word of Christ [to] dwell

among us richly” (Colossians 3:16), by enhancing our engagement with the sermon passages and directing us in shared prayer.

How to Use the Study Guide

The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse for that week. Below that you will find a passage of Scripture, followed by “*Reflection Questions.*” In general, these readings will allow you to reflect on the previous sermon or prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week. We estimate that each day’s lesson should require no more than 15 minutes.

To be clear, this guide is not intended to be a legalistic requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God’s Word. And to what end? Our prayer is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for him and for one another.

A Word about Faith and Doubt

Habakkuk tackles the thorny issues of having faith while asking questions that seem to doubt. We should not be afraid to be honest with God about who we are and what we are concerned about. As Paul encourages us to “not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). It is essential that we keep the lines of communication open with God and learn to humbly trust in him.

At the same time, doubt becomes dangerous when we stop listening to God’s Word, so that doubt becomes the final word. As a result, we encourage everyone to continue meditating on the Word of God personally, and we hope this guide will be a help.

In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ,

Ryan Bouton
February 2020
Quechee, VT

WEEK OF MARCH 8, 2020

Memory Verse:

"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told."

~Habakkuk 1:5 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-4

Reflection Questions:

- How would you describe Habakkuk's state of mind? What is he feeling? How does he feel about his own people?
- What questions does Habakkuk ask of God? What is he concerned about?
- How would you feel about asking God questions like this? What kind of attitude does Habakkuk have towards God?

Prayer:

- Pray for our time in Habakkuk over the next month. Pray that the good news of Jesus Christ would transform our hearts as we read, study, and hear the Word of God preached.
- Pray that God would use this book to shape our attitude towards God and the injustice we see in the world.

WEDNESDAY

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:5-11

Reflection Questions:

- What does God tell Habakkuk to do in v. 5?
- Note the words for “see,” “look,” and “behold” in v. 1-11. Where is Habakkuk’s attention? Where is God’s attention?
- What is God’s answer to Habakkuk’s complaint about injustice in his nation?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would give you eyes to see the world as He does, the ability to grieve over injustice, and the strength to be faithful as we wait for His judgment.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:12-17

Reflection Questions:

- How does Habakkuk respond to God’s answer? What questions does he ask now?
- What is Habakkuk’s concern with God’s plan for his people?

- What is Habakkuk's concern with God's plan for the Chaldeans/Babylonians?

Prayer:

- Pray that we would listen to God's Word humbly, expecting to know more of His grace.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Pray for our time of gathered worship tomorrow. Pray that God would use the preaching of His Word to speak to the needs of our hearts.

WEEK OF MARCH 15, 2020

Memory Verse:

“For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.”

~Habakkuk 2:3-4 (NIV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 2:1-5, Romans 1:16-17

Reflection Questions:

- What does God tell Habakkuk to do with his answer? How do you respond when you are told or it is made clear that you must wait?

- When Habakkuk contrasts the “puffed up” soul of the Chaldeans/Babylonians with his people, how does he describe the righteous person? How is this connected with waiting?

Prayer:

- Pray for the church to be faithful to wait and hope on the Lord in all circumstances.
- Confess your need for God’s grace and your dependence on Him personally, and in the context of your family, your work, and your community.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 2:6-14

Reflection Questions:

- Habakkuk asks God why He would use such brutal people to punish the sins of Israel. What is God’s response?

- What kinds of injustice are described in these verses? What will happen to the Chaldeans/Babylonians because of their injustice?

Prayer:

- Pray for the injustices and needs you see in our community, nation, and world.
- Pray for your own sins and unjust actions; pray that the Lord would forgive, restore, and guide you to live by faith.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 2:15-20

Reflection Questions:

- What did the Chaldeans/Babylonians worship and trust in? What does God say about their worship?

- Why were God's people tempted to worship another god during times of peace? Why might they turn to another god in times of trouble? Where are you tempted to find comfort and security?

Prayer:

- Pray that God calls His church to faithfulness and true worship.
- Pray that God would show His glory and call people in our community to know and worship Him.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Pray for those coming to church who don't yet know God or His Word. Pray for God to open their hearts to truly know and worship Him.
- Pray that God would bring His Word to those who would not come to church, whether due to false ideas about Christ or lack of interest. Pray that God would use you to connect others to Christ.

WEEK OF MARCH 22, 2020

Memory Verse:

"O LORD, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O LORD, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy."

~Habakkuk 3:2 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:1-3

Reflection Questions:

- What is Habakkuk's attitude, having heard God's response to his questions? How else could he have responded if he did not put his trust in God? How is your attitude similar or different?
- Habakkuk does not ask God to suspend his judgment, but to remember mercy. What does this look like? How has God done this for you in Christ?

Prayer:

- Pray with thanks that God has had mercy on sinners, and for the grace that comes to us through Christ!

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:4-7

Reflection Questions:

- How does God show His power and glory in judging the nations?
- How does God show His power and glory throughout the world?
- What do we learn about God through these astonishing actions?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would bring an end to injustice and idolatry throughout the earth, especially among His people.
- Pray that God would show you his glory and draw you to himself.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:8-16

Reflection Questions:

- What images are used to show us God's power and wrath against sin? What is His goal in "going out" to war?
- Why does God act so fiercely? How does Habakkuk respond to this fierce judgment?
- What is Habakkuk hoping for in the midst of God's judgement of Israel?

Prayer:

- Pray for Christians throughout the world who are persecuted for their faith in Christ.
- Pray that God would act in powerful ways to protect His people and bring the good news of His mercy to the world.

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Pray that God would bring His Word of truth tomorrow with power and conviction as it is preached. Pray that He would birth and deepen faith in Jesus Christ both for yourself and everyone else present.
- Pray too that God would help us to grow in our love and affection for Him, toward His body, and our community.

WEEK OF MARCH 29, 2020

Memory Verse:

"Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places."

~Habakkuk 3:18-19 (ESV)

MONDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:16-19, Psalm 25:2-3, Philippians 4:6-7

Reflection Questions:

- What disasters does Habakkuk consider? What are you afraid may happen in your life?
- How can you live by faith in the midst of suffering and injustice? What does it look like to trust in God when His grace does not seem clear to you?

Prayer:

- Present your fears and anxieties about the future to God in prayer. Pray also for the suffering of people around you.
- Pray the church would be an agent of peace in our divided world.

WEDNESDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:16-19, Psalm 25:4-5, 1 Peter 4:12-13, James 1:12

Reflection Questions:

- Why does Habakkuk choose to rejoice? Where does he find reason to be happy during such a devastating situation?

- What are God's intentions for you and the church when you suffer? How would meditating on this change your response to painful trials?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would protect His people and their faith with His peace. Pray that we would be able to rejoice in Christ in all circumstances.
- Pray for our congregations, that God would strengthen our faith to rejoice in Him at all times.

FRIDAY:

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 3:16-19, Psalm 25:10-11, James 1:17

Reflection Questions:

- How does Habakkuk describe the ways God cares for him in the midst of trouble?

- What are some of the ways God has helped you in the past?

- What can you expect God to do for you in painful circumstances? What hope does He give you for the future?

Prayer:

- Pray that God would provide all that we need to live by faith, both in times of peace and times of trouble.
- Give thanks for God's help to you throughout your life, and for the glorious future He promises to his people!

SATURDAY:

Prayer:

- Pray that we would be a community that does not act out of fear, but proactively loves and welcomes all people at our worship services tomorrow.
- Pray that all those who join us for our worship services would see and experience God's kindness and the hope He gives in Christ.



• Christ Redeemer Church •
• P.O. Box 5523, Hanover, NH 03755 •
• office@christredeemerchurch.org •
• www.christredeemerchurch.org •
• Don Willeman, Pastor • 603-643-5588 •