



Sermon, Sunday September 5, 2021 “Habakkuk’s Prayer”

SCRIPTURE: Habakkuk 3:16-19 I hear, and I tremble within; my lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones, and my steps tremble beneath me. I wait quietly for the day of calamity to come upon the people who attack us. ¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights.

Introduction: Questions of the world toward God

Many people in the world question God: ‘Why does suffering exist in this world? Why does evil exist?’ But the world does not offer clear answers to these questions.

On the other hand, Christians also turn to the Lord for help when difficulties arise. But sometimes the Lord is silent on our earnest prayers. In such a situation, it is not easy to wait for the Lord's answer with faith and patience. The prophet Habakkuk, mentioned in today's text, also suffered from these problems. However, the suffering of the prophet Habakkuk was not related to the prophet Habakkuk personally, but to the society and country to which he belonged.

The prophet Habakkuk was active about 2,600 years ago, around when the kingdom of southern Judea was destroyed. He acted as a prophet during the reigns of King Manasseh and his son King Amon, the most evil in Jewish history. Habakkuk’s name means ‘one who embraces, one who comforts’.

Habakkuk 1:2 says: “How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ but you do not save?”

However, as we continue to read the book of Habakkuk, we discover an interesting fact. In the latter part of the book, the prophet Habakkuk, who cried out to God in the face of the contradictions of life, is singing about his deep trust in God in a ‘hopeful’ voice.

The book of Habakkuk begins with questions but ends with conviction, begins with complaints but ends with praise. Therefore, those of us who have doubts and complaints about what is happening in our lives can meditate on the book of Habakkuk, giving us assurance and gratitude for the Lord's salvation, like the prophet Habakkuk.

Body: Habakkuk's Prayer

The Book of Habakkuk consists of three prayers addressed to God by the prophet Habakkuk. The first two prayers ask God questions, and the last prayer acknowledges that God is the master of history and through God's answer the prayer is a confession of glory and thanks to the Lord.

Then, what is the basis for the joy of salvation that Habakkuk confessed?

1) Confidence in the word that the righteous will live by faith.

Habakkuk 2:4-5 says: “See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright--but the righteous will live by his faith - indeed, wine betrays him; he is arrogant and never at rest. Because he is as



greedy as the grave and like death is never satisfied, he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.”

The prophet Habakkuk grieves over the failure of God's justice to be accomplished in the kingdom of Judah. But he did not understand the suffering of the people of Judah by the more evil Babylon. But through the above verse, the Lord is giving Habakkuk a clear message. The Lord knows the pride of the wicked and will judge them.

On the contrary, the Lord makes it clear that His people are those who live by faith. That is, no matter how much the wicked prosper, they will eventually perish, whereas the Lord's people will be saved, even if they are suffering for a short time.

So, what does the Lord mean when He says, “The righteous live by faith”? According to the book of Habakkuk, it means a Christian life that fulfills the justice of the Lord. Greed and arrogance encourage people to live selfishly. In this selfish life, there is no space for our neighbors to live together. When our selfishness diminishes, the space for others in our lives increases..

But the only power that can overcome the selfish instinct of man is faith. When our lives are filled with the love of the Lord, we can truly love our neighbor. On the contrary, the love we make with our strength and effort reaches its limits. It can also be used as a false means of revealing our goodness.

Therefore, as Christians, we should be able to check every day whether we have faith and depend on the Lord in everything we do, or check whether we are making our lives with our own strength. Then, what is the other basis for the joy of salvation that Habakkuk confessed?

2) It is the Lord who rules the universe.

Habakkuk 2:20 says: “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.” This verse is the final part of the Lord's response to Habakkuk's question. We often forget that the Lord who created heaven and earth rules the universe. Of course, God the Creator comes close and friendly in our lives in the form of Jesus in the New Testament. We love seeing the Lord like that. Nevertheless, another essence of the Lord that we must not forget is the fact that He is the Ruler of the whole universe.

What we realize when we stand before the Lord is how foolish the countless questions we asked the Lord were. Just like Habakkuk in today's text, and Job who asked many questions while suffering as a righteous man.

In today's text Habakkuk 3:16, the prophet Habakkuk confesses, “I hear, and I tremble within; my lips quiver at the sound. Rottenness enters into my bones, and my steps tremble beneath me. I wait quietly for the day of calamity to come upon the people who attack us.”

We must not forget that the Creator of the universe, which we cannot reach on our own, gave his life and loved us. So the prophet Habakkuk makes the following confession:

“Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls”(Habakkuk 3:17). “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation”(Habakkuk 3:18).

The world we live in today is still chaotic. The world is full of war, terrorism, poverty, discrimination, violence, murder and greed. But let us not forget that the world is ruled by the Lord. In the end, all the chaos in the world will be resolved in order, according to the will of the Lord. Therefore, we must have faith to be patient and wait for the Lord's reign.



Conclusion: Two Gifts from the Lord to Us

Now let's summarize today's sermon. We have two factors that can help us overcome much of the world's chaos. First, we have the saving power of God, which turns adversity and suffering into joy and thanksgiving. Therefore, even if things in the world do not go according to our will and hope, we must trust that the Lord is doing everything for good.

Another way we can overcome the world's many confusion and suffering is through faith that the Lord has granted to the righteous. Through the faith the Lord has given us, we can overcome greed and pride and live for our neighbors.

Today, the prophet Habakkuk confesses. "I will rejoice in the Lord; I will exult in the God of my salvation."(3:18)

Although we live in a chaotic world, we hope that we can also make this confession to the Lord. And we pray that we will all be able to achieve the justice that the Lord desires.

