



## Sermon, Sunday, September 17, 2023

### “Habakkuk’s Complaint and The LORD’s Answer”

**SCRIPTURE: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4** <sup>1:1</sup> The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw. <sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? <sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. <sup>4</sup> So the law becomes slack, and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous; therefore judgment comes forth perverted. <sup>2:1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faithfulness.

#### Introduction: What is faith?

Today is the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost. The key verse in today’s sermon, the Book of Habakkuk, is “**The righteous live by their faith.**” (Habakkuk 2:4). The expression “**The righteous live by their faith**” also appears in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38. Jesus also emphasized faith to His disciples and people. What is faith, and why does the Bible promote faith?

Generally, people think of faith as something that runs counter to our understanding. Christians believe that faith is an attitude; that faith accepts something as the truth even if it is not understood rationally. Some people misunderstand faith or apply it to their lives to an extreme extent. These people associate all problems with faith. For example, when something difficult happens, they say it is because they lack faith, and even when they ask the right questions about Christian doctrine and the Bible, they criticize it for lack of faith.

Misunderstandings and extreme applications of these beliefs still occur these days. In fact, faith is the highest level of spirituality, but if it is misunderstood, there is a risk that it can degenerate into blind faith. So what does the Bible say about faith?

Today, Habakkuk 2:4 says, “**The righteous live by their faith.**” This verse says that God’s people gain life through faith. However, there are many challenges and difficulties in order for us to correctly understand this verse and confess it with faith.

Why are there so many challenges and difficulties? That’s because we live in an age where we think that money is essential for life. We need money to make others envy us and to avoid asking others for favors. And we must have money to live in a place with good living conditions.

Also, our lives require family and friends. Furthermore, we dream of living a life that is respected by society. Therefore, to people who are accustomed to this way of life, the idea of gaining life through faith sounds empty.

Through Habakkuk’s appeal and God’s response in today’s text, please meditate deeply on the meaning of the words, “**The righteous live by their faith.**” And reflect on our own faith.



## Body: Habakkuk's Complaint and The LORD's Answer

In today's text, **Habakkuk 2:4**, says: **"Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith."**

There is a background to why Prophet Habakkuk said this. The Book of Habakkuk has a very simple structure. Chapter 1 is the prophet Habakkuk's complaint, Chapter 2 is the Lord's answer to it, and the last chapter 3 is Habakkuk's prayer.

Habakkuk's complaint is very clear. **Habakkuk 1:2** says: **"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save?"** Prophet Habakkuk complains about what happened as a result. **Habakkuk 1:4** says: **"So the law becomes slack, and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous— therefore judgment comes forth perverted."**

Prophet Habakkuk complains to God about two problems: First, he complains about evil that is widespread and powerful in the world. He complains to the Lord about evil persecuting righteousness and wicked harassing the innocent.

The Prophet's second complaint is that the Lord does not intervene in a world where evil is rampant. That is why **he says in chapter 1 verse 2**, **"O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?"** Furthermore, **Habakkuk 1:13** says, **"Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?"** Now, Habakkuk is in despair because of the Lord's silence amidst the injustice of the world. So he complains to God.

In response to his complaints, the Lord says that He raised up the Babylonian empire (Habakkuk 1:5-11). To understand these verses, we must know the period in which the prophet Habakkuk was active. The period in which he worked as a prophet was the time when King Josiah, who had tried to reform Judah, died (609 B.C.) and Judah was first taken captive to Babylon (598 B.C.). At that time, the emerging empire of Babylon subdued Assyria and conquered nearby areas. Judea was also helpless in the face of Babylonian violence. Prophet Habakkuk could not understand the situation in which an evil nation was persecuting God's chosen people, the Judeans. So, Habakkuk asked God why He tolerates such injustice.

Then the LORD replied to Prophet Habakkuk. God conveyed His thoughts to Prophet Habakkuk, and God ordered Habakkuk to make it plain on a tablet so that a herald may run with it. God answers Habakkuk's complaints in **Habakkuk 2:3**. **"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."**

Through these words, Prophet Habakkuk realizes what God's justice is. In other words, he realizes that God's will is in God's time. We must have faith that God's word is never false. Also, we must be confident that God's justice will be accomplished without delay, even though it may seem slow to us. This is the spirituality and faith of Prophet Habakkuk.

The prophet Habakkuk says in verse 4 of chapter 2 of today's text, **"Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith."**

In this passage we see two types of people. The proud and the righteous. A proud person cannot find rest and peace in his heart. However, many people do not consider this issue to be a big deal. This is because they only seek physical rest rather than mental rest. A proud person has no choice but to use unrighteous means to maintain something he has gained in an unrighteous way. So their hearts cannot find rest.

However, unlike the proud, the righteous live by faith. In other words, those who believe in God do not despair in any situation because they know and believe that God's victory is already guaranteed.

However, the reality we face is very shabby. This is because we become depressed when the situation deviates even slightly from our expectations, and conversely, we become elated when it improves even a little.



This is our existence. But how can we say that we gain life through faith? Is Habakkuk asking us to do the impossible? What is your answer to this question? The prophet Habakkuk does not ask us to do the impossible.

The Bible provides the clearest solution to this. By becoming one with Jesus and through His faith, we can obtain salvation and rest. Even though Jesus suffered the most unfair and unjust things, He obeyed the will of God the Father and did not give up His faith in God. God raised Jesus to a place of glory. By becoming one with Jesus, we can gain life through the faith and power of Jesus.

### **Conclusion: Oneness with Jesus**

Now let's summarize today's message. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! We do not have the power to save ourselves. The only way we can reach salvation and rest is to entrust our fate to Jesus Christ. That is, to become one with Him.

We can be saved only through faith in Jesus. We receive life not through our own faith, but through faith in Jesus. I hope we all have the faith to rely solely on Jesus.

