

When Failure Has Overcome Us **By Joe R Wheeler**

Introduction We often face difficulties and trials, and at times they bewilder us.

We find our faith to be lacking and our prayer seems unfruitful.

We struggle over the impossibilities of overcoming our fears alone and we face failure in our faith.

At these times, when hope seems lost, we can find ourselves asking... "Does God care?"

This was the situation facing the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk was a man who was struggling with his faith in God.

He was wondering why God seemed to take no notice of the situation he had to endure...he felt like he was alone.

The book of Habakkuk is a record of the dialog he had with God, and the struggle in his soul to find the answers to his questions.

We can learn much about facing our own "failure's of faith", by seeing how God responded to Habakkuk.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

God rewards those who lean on Him for their help. He rejects those who lean on their own strength.

Habakkuk has gone to God with questions, and now God is going to respond to His faith in coming to Him for the answers.

We should learn from this to go to God, not our own intelligence, or that of other men when we are perplexed.

Romans 3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

In God's sight, a man who goes to his knees for answers is stronger than a man who finds his own solutions.

One way is righteous before God, the other way shows an attitude that God's will doesn't matter. If we believe that God doesn't have an answer for our problem, then we will find our own solution. This is foolishness. Habakkuk shows he is no fool, he goes to God for an answer. Note that he went to God with faith that there would be an answer.

1. Perplexing Problems – Habakkuk 1:1-11 *The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. 2 O LORD, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! 3 Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. 4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. 5 Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. 6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. 7 They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. 8 Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. 9 They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. 10 And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every stronghold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. 11 Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god.*

A. Habakkuk Asks A Difficult Question

Habakkuk 1:1-4 He stood in the midst of a wicked nation and cried out...but nobody listened. He couldn't understand why God wouldn't do anything about it. Why would He not answer? Today we face the same situations, our nation is as evil as Israel at the time.

Examples: A Justice system that seems to be driven by money...justice can be bought.

A society that seems to crave evil...everything is acceptable and protected.

A Church that is like the world around it...anyone can serve God the way they choose.

B. Habakkuk Gets A Difficult Answer

Habakkuk 1:5-11 God's answer is not a pleasant one. He will bring judgment on the nation by bringing an even more evil nation to dis-possess them of their inheritance.

This is not what Habakkuk was expecting. How could God use evil to make His people turn back to good?

We can study the history in the Bible to discover that God often uses evil to save His people. Sometimes, the solution to a problem is to make things much worse for us until we break down from the weight of it, then we will finally turn away from our own way to follow God's way.

Habakkuk found the answer to the question to be a difficult one for him to accept. He may have almost wished he hadn't asked the question, so terrifying was the answer. We also may find that the course God has chosen for us is a difficult one.

2. Powerful Principles – Habakkuk 1:12-13 *Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. 13 Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*

He reviews the God that he knows, and tries to put this new revelation together with the image he had.

He remembers the long-suffering and patience of God, and tries to plead the cause of the nation...surely there is another answer. He needed to accept the way that God has chosen

3. Persistent Praise – Habakkuk 3:17-19 *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.*

After he gets done with his dialog with God, he still doesn't have everything figured out. If the Chaldeans are coming on Israel, he himself could become a their victim. Habakkuk is able to accept this possibility, he is at peace with it. The word *Selah* appears 70 times, it only appears once out of the Psalms, it appears here. This Hebrew word is thought by many to mean the passage is to be sung as praise to God.

Conclusion

Like Habakkuk, we are often dismayed and find ourselves feeling alone and in distress. We should reflect on the past difficulties we have survived and recognize Who it was that saved us. We must lean on Jesus, and when it seems He is not there, Lean Harder!!! He will be there.

