



Pastor David's Weekly Devotional

Those who try to acquit God from ever sovereignly causing or allowing any calamity, suffering or pain – on a personal or national level – must modify, if not outright ignore, passages such as Habakkuk chapter one. For in it, the prophet Habakkuk clearly implicates God as tolerating wickedness and allowing the suffering of His people. Then, in response to his cries, God answers Habakkuk not by reassuring him but by giving him a further glimpse into the greater suffering that God was about to bring as judgment against Judah: *“I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor”* (1:6-7). While Habakkuk did not understand how a just and loving God could allow such suffering, God Himself unapologetically acknowledged His sovereign hand in it. God attributes their suffering not to chance, or prevailing evil forces, but to His decretive will (see Ex.4:11; Is.45:7; 46:8-10; Rom.8:28; 9:17; Eph.1:11).

Clearly, the question, “Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?” has plagued people and society since perhaps the Fall of Adam and Eve. Yet, it fascinates me the way the Scriptures never seem to completely answer that question (or questions like it). Scripture is replete with vivid descriptions of God as perfectly and infinitely loving, just and kind, but seems to be intentionally ambiguous concerning the actions, or inactions, of God when it comes to personal suffering and national calamity (e.g. Job and Luke 13:1-5).

Perhaps the reason for this is simply because our finite brains cannot fully appreciate or understand God's sovereignty in the midst of suffering and evil. Perhaps this is one way God simply expects us to pursue Him with absolute faith and trust. Perhaps when we wonder with Habakkuk, *“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”* (1:13) we are left simply to trust in God's sovereign goodness and greatness. Perhaps when we place our hope and faith in God in this way – in the midst of pain and trials – we will learn what it means to truly trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding (cf. Prov.3:5-6).

When it comes to personal tragedy and national calamity, theological study can be exponentially easier than practical experience. There is something particularly “safe” about a mere academic theology. If one is not careful, this can lead the theology student into an intellectual fortress that is distant and unaffected by individual experience. This disconnect is not a luxury afforded to Christians. For mental ascent without emotional relationships is hardly a quality of a follower of Jesus Christ.

Notice Habakkuk does not try to reduce His understanding of God to manageable proportions. He is not afraid to have a belief in God that he does not fully comprehend. There is so much about God – especially in the midst of suffering and pain – that Habakkuk does not understand (that God does not answer), yet he maintains his faith and hope in the goodness and greatness of God: *“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength...”* (Hab.3:17-19). Similarly, in the midst of his intense suffering, Job declared: *“Though [God] slay me, I will hope in Him”* (Job 13:15).

May our lives echo this declaration of faith and trust in our Sovereign Savior!

Together in and for Christ,
Pastor David
(11/24/25)

Scripture Readings for the Week (Monday – Sunday ~ Week #47):

Deuteronomy 16-19; Ezra 6-10; Ps 134-136; Ecclesiastes 9-10; Zechariah 8-14; Acts 17-18; 2 Peter

Recommended Reading:

“If God is Good ...” by Randy Alcorn