

Read Habakkuk 1

Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they? Hab 1:13

Everyone thinks they're the good guys. During every war that's ever been fought, people always saw their own cause as right and good. Their fight was a picture of good versus evil. This is true whether you examine the American Revolution, Civil War, or even the Nazi party members in WWII Germany. There is one major problem with this: in a fight, everyone can't be right. Sometimes, no one is.

Habakkuk is a terrific book where we see someone ask God very specific questions, and then wait on an answer. Habakkuk has complained about the evil that he sees around him in his nation, and asks why God doesn't do something about it. So God reveals to Habakkuk that He's going to use the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to defeat Israel and ultimately get their attention. Suddenly, Israel doesn't seem so bad to Habakkuk. He asks God why godless people would be used to judge the righteous. While Israel certainly should have been righteous, they weren't. Habakkuk was now overestimating their standing with God. **Do you overestimate your righteousness? We know that any righteousness we have comes through Jesus Christ, but we also know that we're called to lead a righteous life. So do we view our service for the Lord as something that makes us better than others? If it weren't for Christ, that kind of service would have never dawned on us, at least not the point that we reach as a believer. So examine yourself today: are you holding yourself in too high esteem? Are you ignoring or missing your own sin as a result of comparing your life to sinners around you?**

Read Habakkuk 2

Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith. Hab 2:4

There are two things that I can do to my car: I can change a turn signal bulb and I can replace an air filter. So when either of these parts need changed, I enjoy my opportunity to play mechanic. Unfortunately, whoever designed van engines must have had the hands of a 7 year old. The air filter is very hard to get to, but I didn't want to pay someone for something I could do myself. During the first replacement, I worked for a long time to get that filter in there, and once it was in, I noticed that it hadn't seated properly. Now that filter might have worked OK, but it wasn't in the best position for effectiveness. So I worked at it a few more painful minutes until I knew that the filter was in the right place.

Poor engineering made the air filter hard to get right in my van. Pride makes it hard for the soul to get right in our lives. If we were to examine the sins that come into our lives and separate us from God, at the root of all those sins is pride. Whether it's believing that we deserve to have something or we simply ignore God, it always comes down to pride. We are not to live lives of pride, but of faith. Faith recognizes one major constant: that everything is God's. Our lives are God's. Our decisions are God's. Our children are God's.

Pride tells us that we own everything ourselves. **Is your soul right within you? Is pride too much a part of your daily life? As someone who has dealt many years with pride, I'll tell you it's one of Satan's favorite tools. He will convince you you're good because of the work you do for God. That's pride. I'm not awesome because of the ministry God gives me. He's awesome because He's given me the talents to perform that ministry. Ask God to reveal areas of pride in your life as well as areas that your faith is lacking.**

Read Habakkuk 3

Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. Hab 3:17-18

What could you lose that would shake your faith? My wife and I have lost children during pregnancy. That was difficult. We have seen our bank account drain from comfortable to crisis during times I couldn't find a job. That wasn't easy. We have gone to ministries that looked like a great place on the outside, but turned out to be a mess inside. Those were trying days. But should any of these events in our life really be faith shakers? Is our faith dependent on only good things happening?

The point of the Christian life is that difficult times will come, but God will not leave. Habakkuk received the worst news of his life, to hear that a godless people would run through and conquer Israel with little effort. In the long run, God still promised a plan for them, but I don't think that softened the difficulty of the message. But Habakkuk goes through a list in verse 17 of all the troubles that could come. He says that in spite of long-term and deep ruin to his nation and his personal finances, that He will praise God and rejoice in the God of his salvation. Here's what Habakkuk recognized; if God gives us nothing other than saving us, that's enough. He didn't have to promise anything beyond that. But in those moments that life is difficult and we're not getting everything we want, we should be no less willing to praise the God that saved us in spite of ourselves. **Are you moping or rejoicing? Is God getting the praise in your life in front of unbelieving friends and family? Or do they see us in the same situations as they are and just as hopeless? Jesus offers hope in every situation. Have you talked to Him in your difficulties? Have you praised Him and thanked Him for the previous work He has performed in your life?**