

Trusting God to Do What's Right

Trusting God in Trying Times

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We are here today in a position of strength as we consider the topic of trusting God in trying times. We're just going to dive right back into Habakkuk 1 in follow up to what we said last night without much by the way of introduction. I'm so glad that you're all with us here this morning. It's a great encouragement to my heart. What we said last time was the question that often does not get answered as we are going through trials is how do I trust God? We understand that we are supposed to trust God; that we are commanded to trust God; that we are to be strong in the strength of the Lord and in the strength of his might. We understand that the question is how do we tap into the resources of the God of angel armies in order to live out with a real strength? Not with a manufactured hypocritical smile on a Sunday morning that pretends and puts on a mask to look like everything is okay when you're interacting with people but inside you're still crushed; no, we want to go inside your heart to that which would strengthen your heart so that all of these things would be real in the inner core of your man, your inner man, your heart that you would be strong inside. If you're strong inside, everything else will take care of itself and that's where we want to go and to strengthen you, strengthen each other here this morning.

How do you trust God? Well, there's a bit of a process to it. There is a manner of thinking that you approach things with that establishes these things in your heart and to state it maybe a little bit differently than what we did last night but saying the same thing in different words, you put aside your problem for a time and you think about who God is and the way that he acts toward his people. You don't start with your problem and say, "I have this difficulty. What does that say to me about God?" That is the way that most people think. It's not the way of Christian thinking. Christian thinking is exactly the opposite of that. Christian thinking starts with who is God and what does that say about my problem? It's a complete reversal of approach and when you reverse the approach, you're in a position of strength instead of weakness.

For those of you who work with your hands, it's like building a house. How does a contractor build a house? The first thing that he does is he pours the foundation, he frames up the walls, he puts on a roof, and he does all of that before he installs the details of carpet and paint and the things of decor that make the final appearance. Well, it's a little bit like that with trusting God. You must start your thinking with a mental framework of biblical principles in your mind. You start with biblical principles that say,

"This is what God is like. This is how he deals with his people," before you ever get to the details of the individual situation that you're facing. And once you start with that framework, then the whole context of your difficulty is changed and you are in a position to move forward with strength. Like the jigsaw puzzle, you have an individual piece, you put it into its context and say, "Oh, it fits right there." Not outside the bounds of the frame but it fits in there with the house, the carpet, the paint; it fits inside the framework that was previously established. When you're thinking through the difficulties of life, you establish a framework of who God is and then you consider your problem because, beloved, here's the point: the funny thing about this is that it's so simple; it's so direct; it's so obvious. God is who he is and God is immutable. God never changes. God never violates his own character. Ever. He is consistent. He can be trusted because he is always faithful to his own character in his revealed word. What does that mean for you as a Christian in the middle of your trials? It means that God will work with you, God will work in your life in a way that is consistent with his character. He will never violate his character with you no matter how much it might scream in life at a particular time that this is the one exception; that this is a violation of his faithfulness to you. Beloved, your worst problems, your most difficult relationships, your saddest times in life will never contradict the fact that God is holy, God is good, God is gracious and when he saved you he intended to deal with you in that manner for all of eternity. That will never change. It couldn't change. The stars will fall out of the sky before that changes. So that's the way that we need to think. We need to be anchored in truth about who God is and the way that he deals with his people far more than we are anchored at so-called, maybe a better way to state it, far more than we are swept up in the problems of the day whether those are personal problems, whether those are national problems about the future of our country, the future of the world, what's going to happen with the church, we always come back to these same fundamental principles. This simplifies life and helps us live in a way that is truthful.

So how do you establish trust to sustain your heart? We said you need to trust God. You trust God when you evaluate your problems in light of his ways that he has revealed in his word and then you rest your confidence that he will ultimately deal with you in a manner that is consistent with those ways. Have you ever watched a baseball game on tape delay where you knew the outcome of the game as you were watching it? Have you ever watched any kind of sporting event, for those of you that don't like baseball, any kind of sporting event or a movie that you've watched before and you know the outcome as you're watching it again? Knowing the outcome takes away the suspense, the doubt and the uncertainty of it. You already know how it comes out so even if your team is down, but if you know that your team has already won, you don't have to be worked up about the incidental time when you're behind because you know the outcome. Well, beloved, it's that way when you know God. It's that way when you know Christ. The outcome will certainly be good for you in the end. Why? Because Christ saved you by his shed blood and by his righteousness with the intention to bless you for ever and ever. Amen. That's the outcome and you know that because it's been revealed to you in God's word that that's the way it comes out in the end. So by what manner of distorted thinking do we get all bent out of shape out of what's happening day to day in our own lives or in the course of world affairs and all points in between?

How do you establish trust to sustain your heart? First of all, last night we said: God's ways are not your ways. God's ways are not your ways. In the book of Habakkuk, the prophet thought that God should change the situation that he was seeing but God had left things just as they were, he was not doing it Habakkuk's way. And we realize that there are going to be times when God is directing our lives that things...we understand that there will be things that happen, that events will come to pass that we don't understand that are contrary to our desires, that are difficult and weigh heavy on our hearts. We understand that and we realize that that doesn't contradict the ultimate faithfulness of God to us. All it contradicts is our own sense of self-sufficiency and understanding and being in control but it doesn't mean that God has somehow changed.

Secondly, we saw that God's ways are often hidden. God's ways are often hidden. He was doing a far greater work than Habakkuk could have imagined. As we looked at the middle of chapter 1, we saw that he was raising up a world power by his strength. He was bringing up a nation that would invade multiple countries including his own people in order to discipline them; in order to chastise them; in order to punish them for their wayward ways. Habakkuk said, "God, you're not doing anything about the sin that I see in front of me as a prophet of God." And God, in effect says, "Habakkuk, you don't know what you're talking about. Look out on the world scene and you'll see that there is this power coming up and I'll tell you what I'm doing with it, that's going to be the power that disciplines my people." So Habakkuk in his narrow view of things completely misjudged the situation.

Now, beloved, here's the thing, here's where you and I have to enter into the flow of biblical revelation, we have to step into the flow of what we understand from Scripture. This is central. This is obvious. This is the only way that it can be and I beg you to take this to heart and I have to beg you because it's contrary to your pride and self-sufficiency to think this way. You do not have the capacity as a mortal being, you do not have the capacity to accurately evaluate your situation based on what you see and feel at the present time. You don't have that capacity. Your perspective is too narrow. You are bound by time. You are diminished in your mental faculties by sin. You are biased in your own favor. You are biased in terms of what you want it to be. So, beloved, you have to learn, here it is: the key to trusting God is to begin by distrusting your own judgment. What you see, in the next session this morning I'll establish this to you irrefutably, what you see is not a reliable indicator of what is good. The sinful mortal creature is not in a capacity to sit in judgment in this time about the holy eternal purposes of an uncreated God. When you embrace that, then you are prepared to step back and see things differently. As we continue in Habakkuk, we'll see how this works out.

Point 3 for our conference here this weekend, point 3 as we continue on in this is that you need to remember this: God's ways are holy. God's ways are holy. Look at chapter 1, verses 12 and 13 and notice, this is just so key to understand that we are looking at these verses and wanting to understand what they say and what they mean but we also need to understand the mental, the spiritual approach that Habakkuk is taking as he deals with God and deals with his problem. Look for the approach in addition to the things that he

says about God here. Chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, Habakkuk is a prophet to a sinful nation. God is raising up a nation to come in and judge them and now we pick it up at verse 12 and Habakkuk responds as they continue this dialogue with one another. He prays any says,

12 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. 13 Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.

We'll stop there for the moment. What is Habakkuk doing here? What is his method, his spiritual approach? He is doing something very simple and very basic, he is putting the issues of his heart into the context of the character of God. He says, "I see these things happening. I'm agitated over this and that issue, but let me set that aside for a time and just talk about who you are, God." You know, again, you and I are alike, our tendency is when we pray, is that we just want to rush immediately to ask God for the solution. "God, I've got this problem and here's how I want you to solve it." It's no wonder that our prayer lives are meager when that's our approach. Habakkuk shows us what we've seen in the first 30 Psalms for those of you that have been with us in mid-weeks over the past several months, that you start with the character of God. You recite, you rehearse the character of God and that's what Habakkuk is doing here, beloved, he's laying a spiritual foundation upon which to build his further thinking. He's building a framework into which everything else will fit and what he's doing here is he is affirming truth about God.

Look at it there with me, verse 12 again, he says, "Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One?" He's saying, "God, you're eternal. You transcend time therefore you see things in a way that I could never see them. You're the eternal God who has always ruled over all." Look again at verse 12, he says, "Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One. You are my God. You're Yahweh. You're the covenant keeping, promise keeping God who has been established before time began. You are my God. You are everlasting. And not only are you everlasting," this is what you should be rehearsing in your mind as you think about those problems that you brought into the room today. "Not only are you everlasting and eternal, you are holy. You are unchanging, eternal, and you are holy." Why does that matter? Why is that significant? God is morally pure. He is without sin. He is sovereign and Scripture teaches us that he "works all things after the counsel of his own will," Ephesians 1:10. Romans 8:28, that he "causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose."

So now the snowball is starting to roll downhill; we're starting to finally build some momentum here of constructive truth that we can build our lives on. God is so pure, he is so perfect, he is so faithful, he is so honorable that he could never do anything wrong. If he dealt wrongly with you at any point in time in the course of your existence after taking you to be his own and saying, "I will be your God," if he ever violated his faithfulness to be good and gracious and holy toward you, the universe would collapse because God would have changed and that is not possible. The holiness of God guarantees that he will

never deal with you in an unwise, unkind or unfaithful way. It's impossible. Did you get that? It's impossible. So whatever the sorrows are that you're facing today, we're not diminishing the depth of the sorrow as hopefully you saw from what I said last night; we don't diminish the depth or the difficulty of the sorrow, we're adding another element to the mix that transcends it; that God is holy, sovereign, everlasting, gracious and good over your sorrow and that sets the context for how you're to understand it. And this is what Habakkuk is doing. God had just told him that he was raising up a world power to invade his nation. This would be like knowing that the Islamic extremists of our day, God was going to strengthen them and invade the United States and they would become our rulers and masters. It's of like cloth and if we knew that that was the case, it would cause us to tremble, to fear at what lay immediately ahead. That's what Habakkuk was facing. The context of this is very important.

So with that kind of news delivered to his mind, Habakkuk says, "Let me step back and talk about that which frames everything else. I'm not worried about the nation, I'm trusting in the holiness and the everlasting nature of God as I respond to this. God, your character means something to the circumstances that I'm facing." And what does Habakkuk do with that knowledge there in verse 12? Look at it with me, he says, "Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One?" He draws a conclusion from that, he says, "We will not die." We will not die. God hadn't told him that. How could Habakkuk be so sure that this invasion would not be the end of the people of God? If they were a mighty conquering nation and they were in guilt before God, how could he be so confident that the nation would not die at the hands of this impending invasion? Well, lying behind Habakkuk's approach to God is his understanding of the promises that God had made to his people. We've looked at these on Tuesday nights going back to Genesis. God had promised an everlasting seed to Abraham. God had promised a throne to David; that there would always be a king to sit on the throne of David. And follow me here, follow what this means: those promises could never be broken because, not because of the goodness of the people but because of who God is, because God had promised, because he is holy, he is everlasting, he is omnipotent. He has the power to deliver on his promises and his power means that his promises won't be broken; his goodness and faithfulness means he would always use his power to accomplish those ends.

So because God keeps his promises to his people, there may be a time of discipline and chastisement that is excruciatingly painful but it would never be the end of the nation of the Jews. It could not be. It could not happen because that would mean that God had broken his promises that he had made and the eternal God never does that. That's in Habakkuk's context. Again, notice the process that he's going through. You start with revealed biblical principles. You start with revealed aspects of the character of God and say, "This guides my understanding of everything that happens. This determines how I think about the circumstances that are in front of me." Oh, beloved, it's too early in the morning for me to pound on the pulpit so I won't do that but trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to deliver this deep to your heart so that it takes root there and stays there, God does not abandon his people. Are you a Christian here today? God has not, cannot, will not, would not abandon you. He is still with you. What did Jesus say at the end of the Gospel of Matthew? "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age. Nothing can

separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Romans 8 says. So we always have to go back to that and, beloved, I'm quite confident that almost every one of you is just like me, you are prone to forget that in the face of the immediate circumstances that are right in front of you. You have to stir yourself up. You have to go back to these same things again and again and again and again and again and again because you're prone to wander, w-a-n-d-e-r. You're prone to wander from this.

Now, speaking to those of you that are more reformed, more doctrinal in your thinking, some Christians know to say in their trials that God is sovereign, God is in control, and that's a good thing to say. That is a right affirmation to make in the midst of your difficulties. "God is sovereign over this. God is directing this to accomplish his purposes. God works everything according to the counsel of his will," you say, and it's good that you would say that but, beloved, that's not all that you can say. It's not all that you should say. I've seen as a pastor so many times people say that and you can just tell by their countenance that they don't draw any hope from that truth. Why is that? You can say God is sovereign with a spirit of resignation that, in essence, is saying, "God is in control but I don't understand. I don't like it and I'm miserable still in the midst of it." If you're miserable as you're saying God is sovereign, there's more spiritual work for you to do in your heart because the hopelessness, the despair, the discouragement that colors your declaration of the sovereignty of God is actually a contradiction of the truth that you are saying with your lips.

You see, here's the thing, beloved, and this is all so simple. It's not like I'm giving you things that are embedded in Hebrew grammar that you would never be able to verify for yourself. There is none of that in what I'm saying. This is all right on the surface waiting for you to scoop up like big chunks of gold and take them to the bank and profit from them. That's what this is. Biblical trust, trusting God, is far more than simply believing and saying that God is in control. There is more to it than that because there's more to the nature of God than that. You see, biblical trust – follow me here – biblical trust believes and it knows that God will do what is right because biblical trust knows his holy character. Yes, God is sovereign and we praise God for that. We tremble in fear at that but don't lose sight of this, beloved: God's sovereignty is holy; God's sovereignty is good; God's sovereignty is faithful. All of those things are wrapped together around the whole indivisible nature of the essence of God. Yes, he's sovereign but he is simultaneously infinitely good, faithful, righteous in his sovereignty and that changes everything.

So here's the part that we often miss when we say God is sovereign, here's the part that you're tempted to miss, overlook: God is sovereign, yes, he exercises his control over his creation, praise his holy name for that, but, beloved, because of who God is and the totality of his being for you as a Christian, God will inexorably, inevitably, without fail exercise his control to bless you in the end no matter how bad it seems right now. That's what you've got to lay hold of. God is who he is. God is sovereign and therefore all of the details are under his direction and control. We should go and we can go and we need to go so far as to say that God has designed your current trial that you are suffering under, he has designed it for you; he brought it into your life. He didn't merely passively stand by, his hand was directing it to bring it to you just in this exact form because he's

sovereign. He's in control over all. But you don't stop there, you say, "The God who did that, holy, good, righteous, true, faithful, merciful, gracious, all of those things and therefore whatever is in my life is somehow a further expression of his goodness to me even though I don't understand at all." That's how biblical trust thinks. That's how it works. And so you say to yourself, you meditate in your heart over time again and again and again, you preach to yourself, you counsel yourself and you say, "Somehow in a way that I don't understand, this trial expresses the goodness of God to me because he is never unfaithful to me." You say, "But it's really hard." Okay, I agree. It is hard but God didn't change when your circumstances changed.

One writer said that you should never deny in the dark what you came to know to be true in the light. You know, for most people there is a period of time after their conversion where everything is just so wonderful and joyful as you're soaking in the knowledge of God and the ramifications of the fact that Jesus Christ shed his blood on the cross to redeem you from your sins and that you have a secure position with God and you luxuriate in that, you love that and you grow in that. It's joyful. That's the way it was for me. The early days of my conversion were magnificent and I thank God for it even though I was alone in that. Just the preciousness of opening God's word and reading it and understanding it and just letting that soak your soul in joy because the word is true and you belong to God, isn't that wonderful to be in that position? You know what that's like if you're a Christian. Well, here's the thing as you look back on that, you look back on those times in your life where it was like that, when the storm clouds came, God didn't change with them.

Illustration: none of you when you're watching the weather, we've got a day like today and it's sunny and it's gorgeous outside, what are we doing inside, I don't know. But it's gorgeous outside. The sun is shining. The sky is blue. The trees are blooming and I love this time of year and do you know what? It is inevitable and you just say, "Oh, the sun is just there. It's glorious." Not a one of you thinks that when a storm blows up and the temperatures drop and the wind is blowing, the black clouds are obscuring the sun and you can't see it, none of you think that the sun went away. You understand that this is just a storm blowing through; it's passing through and the sun will come back in time. You don't panic even if it's overcast for one or two or three or four weeks. You just know that the sun is back behind those clouds. It's the same way. The same God that was gracious to you in the early days of your conversion is behind the clouds in this unfavorable providence that you're facing now. So where does that leave you? It leaves you in a place where you are no longer panicked. You are no longer afraid that something has changed or gone wrong. You're now in a position of strength. Why? Simply because you have brought the character of God upon your difficulties.

Now, having said that, my friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, I'm not suggesting for a moment that that means that it will be easy. When people that are dear to your heart are stubborn toward the Gospel and plunging into destruction because of their own sinful stubborn ways and you want to stop them and you can't and people separate from you because of your love for Christ, you know, you still feel that. That doesn't mean that it

will be simple. It wasn't simple for Habakkuk and that's what we see as we continue on in verse 13. He still had difficult questions on his mind.

Look at verse 13. Habakkuk 1:13, he says, after he said, "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. That would violate your character so I know that's not true, but there's something I don't understand, God," verse 13,

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?

Here's what he's asking in the context of his historical situation, he's saying, "God, by your own testimony this Chaldean people are wicked, they're violent, they're aggressive, they are anti-God, they worship false gods. They are worse than we are. How can it be that you would use them to discipline a people that is more righteous than them? The scales seem out of balance here. How can a holy God use a wicked instrument to accomplish his purposes?" That's what he's wrestling with. It's a profound theological difficulty for him.

Look at what he says in verse 15, he says,

15 The Chaldeans bring all of them up with a hook [talking about their
captives, their prisoners of war], They drag them away with their net, And
gather them together in their fishing net. Therefore they rejoice and are
glad.

And what do they do?

16 Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net And burn incense to their
fishing net; Because through these things their catch is large, And their
food is plentiful.

Now, we all know from the Old Testament God hates idolatry. He condemns false worship and here is this wicked nation prospering and in their prosperity they offer false worship to their idols and attribute to a false god their success and they give glory to that which is not real and Habakkuk says, "God, how can you countenance that? How can you even let that flourish for a time?" And he says in verse 17, he said,

17 Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations
without sparing?

"Are they just going to go on and on like this? Will they ascend and prosper even though they are wicked and godless? God, I don't understand how it can be this way."

Now, here's the thing pastorally for you as we take this and apply it in our own lives and we rehearse the character of God, his holiness, his goodness, we say, "Okay, my

problems can't contradict that," but sometimes you're still left with a sense of a lack of closure, a lack of resolution. You know, you wonder about, you still have questions. What do you do then? You've framed it. Here's what you've done, you've narrowed the scope of the issues but not everything is resolved in your heart. There are still struggles there that you're going through. What do you do then? Point 4 as you understand God's ways, as you learn how to walk with God through difficulties, point 4: God's ways may make you wait. God's ways may make you wait. In other words, you're not going to get satisfaction for every question that's on your heart instantly. It doesn't work that way. You know, I know some of you, you know, you can ask 1,000 questions and get them all answered and then you've got 10,000 more and that's all right. I don't mind that at all. I really don't. I love the inquisitive mind but there are some things about the unfolding of life, the questions of things that really matter to you and there is just not an apparent good answer to it.

What do you do then? God's ways may make you wait. What does Habakkuk do? He's got this question on his mind, "God, are they just going to continue to prosper and never be held to account? There is a tension here, God, between what I know to be true and what I see and I can't understand it." What does he do? The prophet stations himself in his spirit to wait on God's answer. Look at chapter 2, verse 1. He says,

1 I will stand on my guard post
And station myself on the rampart;
And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me,
And how I may reply when I am reproved.

What has he done? He has stated his case before God. He has trusted in God. He has worked through the issue as far as he can based on what he knows but there are still some unanswered questions. What does he do there? Well, here in this verse, he's comparing himself to a watchman who would take his spot of watching out for the enemy on a tower and he says, "I'm going to stand watch and I'm going to look for the answer of God to come." The watchman would look out and look for movement on distant lines. Habakkuk had laid everything out to God but he still had things that he had no answer to. He knew that God could answer. He was confident that God would answer but he didn't have the answer just right now and so what did he do? He said, "There's nothing left for me to do but wait. I'm going to wait on God until he makes things clearer to me." Now, here's what that means: Habakkuk says, "I've laid it all out and now I just have to wait. If God reproofs me for what I've said, I'll accept the reproof but I've gone as far as I can with what I know. Now what?" Here's what it means for you: you may not have answers to your questions when you want them. It's another reminder that you are not in control of this situation. God is not a bell boy that answers every possible question that you might have about your life and circumstances on the spot and just give you instant gratification. God is not a God who provides you instant gratification. That's not his purpose in existence. Sometimes you just have to wait.

So what do you do then? What does it mean to wait biblically? Well, biblical waiting – notice this – biblical waiting is not a passive resignation to the inevitable. "Oh, whatever is going to happen is happening. I'll just wait for it to happen." No, that's not biblical

trust, beloved. Biblical waiting – notice, let's look at chapter 2, verse 1 again, notice the expectancy that Habakkuk speaks with in chapter 2, verse 1, "I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved." He expects God to respond and he says, "And I'm just going to wait until he does." So when you are in that time of uncertainty and you are lacking clarity, here's what you do, here's your responsibility in trust: you continue in God's word. You continue reading God's word faithfully, studying God's word, being together with God's people on a faithful basis. You continue in prayer, worshiping and honoring God and expressing your dependence upon him. You continue doing all of that even though you don't have the answers that you think you so desperately need and that you so desperately want. In other words, beloved – oh, this is just so basic, this is just so basic to being a Christian – you don't suspend your faithfulness to God in your Christian duty until you get what you want because just as God hasn't changed, your duty of response to him hasn't changed. His word is worthy of your attention regardless of what's going on in your life. Jesus commanded you to pray without ceasing regardless of what was going on in your life. So you continue in giving God your devotion, your love, your worship, your affection even though there are things that you want to understand that you don't. So you continue in all of those things even without your answers and here's how you do it: you continue in that in a confident hope, a certain expectation that in God's wisdom and in God's good time he will make things more clear to you than they are right now and you say, "God, I'll just wait on you but in the meantime you'll find me being faithful to my Christian duty. My difficulties are not an exemption from obedience and faithfulness on my own part hear," that's what you say to yourself.

So you continue in that confident hope and here's the thing, beloved, there are things like this, what I'm about to say, in my life, there are certainly things like this in your life as well. Even if you have to wait until heaven, even if you don't get the answers that you want in this life, it doesn't change your approach or perspective. You just say, "I am going to patiently wait on my God. My God will certainly vindicate my trust and my faith in him." And even though I don't see it now, even though people can look from the outside and say, as they did to the Psalmist, "Where is your God?" you say your God is good. "Look at your situation. That doesn't look like a good God to me." You stand established like a lighthouse in the midst of the beating waves that say, "I'm not moving. My God is good. My God is faithful and I know he'll prove that to me in the end, and if I wait until heaven, that's fine by me. Heaven will simply be, one aspect of heaven will be the unending vindication of my trust in God."

Beloved, there won't be any doubt in heaven that God has been good and faithful to you, will there? Is that even possible? That you could be in the immediate visible presence of Christ and somehow think that God hadn't been good and faithful to you when you are going to be in perfect bliss, joy, without sin, glorified and made like Christ and enjoying him throughout all of eternity, worshiping him with the saints throughout the ages unhindered by sin, never to be threatened by Satan or trial ever again? When you're in that immutable place of blessing, is there any possibility that we're going to be looking at

one another and saying, "Man, this is a letdown, huh? This didn't work out like I thought, you?" That's not even going to be in our mind as a joke.

So, beloved, going back to the taped version of the ballgame, if you know that that's the outcome and, Christian, you know that that's the outcome, right? You know that that's the outcome, right? This is how your existence turns out. It turns out in perfection with you enjoying eternal blessings that are geometrically, exponentially far beyond anything that you asked or thought, let alone anything that you deserved. The piling on of the grace of God in eternity is what lays ahead for you. And you say, "But I don't know how this earthly thing works out." Okay, granted, I don't either but can't you just wait just a little bit longer until God lays out before you the fullness of the eternal purpose that he has for you in Christ in heaven knowing that this earthly life is just a passing shadow, a vapor in the wind, that these trials are not eternal? If you know the outcome and you know the small sliver of space that these trials occupy in your eternal existence, can't you just trust God a little bit longer and wait for him just a little bit more? Maybe on earth it's all going to complain and you'll see things and you'll experience the blessing of it in this life and that would be a great blessing from God. I hope he does that for you. But even if he doesn't, even if he holds back the blessing until eternity, won't the outcome be worth the wait? I ask you, answer this question: won't the outcome be worth the wait for you, beloved in Christ? Won't it be? If that's true, then wait just a little bit longer with the expectation that God will still answer you. The story is not over. The final chapter hasn't been written. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding." You see, that's what we're talking about here. Don't lean on your own understanding based on what you see now. "Acknowledge him in all your ways, And He will make your paths straight." That God is worthy of your trust. Sometimes you just have to wait.

Now, the book of Habakkuk has much more to teach us but you're going to have to wait until our next session. Let's pray together.

Father, we thank you that your glory is great, your faithfulness is majestic, and that you have set your favor on us in a way that guarantees the ultimate outcome; the ultimate outcome will be far more glorious than anything we ever imagined and we rest our hope and confidence in that. Father, for those that are here that are outside of Christ, the certain expectation for them is the exact opposite. O God, we pray that you would teach them to fear God, those who do not know you. Teach them the fear of this sovereign holy God who will one day be their Judge. Teach them to fear him. Break their heart. Break their pride. Break their cynical spirit, O God. By the power of the might of your Holy Spirit, humble them before Christ that they might turn to him in repentant faith and be saved from their sins. O God, we commit these things to you and we look forward to still more just ahead as we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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