

The Knowledge of God's Glory

Habakkuk 2:1-20 || Pastor John Wood || 13 September 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is the most unusual item in your home?

Worship: Psalm 73:23-26 (*Read aloud 3 times, reflect and listen for God's invitation to you.*)

Sermon Summary for Habakkuk 2:1-20 (*Read the passage.*)

When we see oppression and injustice and our hearts cry out, we need to remember this vision where God makes clear the distinction between the self-righteous who do not know the Lord versus those who acknowledge their sin and brokenness – who humbly entrust themselves to the mercy and grace of God (v1-5). The Lord offers five stern warnings of destruction for those who do not repent and turn from their wickedness:

[1] A curse on those who build their wealth through dishonesty (v6), with no sense of those they harm along the way. When our success is all that matters, we show how desperately far we are from the call to love our neighbor – the primary mark of God's children. [2] Woe to those who build their house on injustice (v9), using ill-gotten wealth for personal aggrandizement, living as if we are the world's master. [3] God warns those who build their city through violence (v12). So much of history tells of nations built on the blood of those who lived there previously. And then the violent beginnings are forgotten. But God does not forget and calls His children to repent.

The final woes are directed at [4] those who betray their neighbor for physical pleasure (v15) and [5] those who betray the Lord for spiritual pleasure (v18). The former is a cruel, explicit denial of the commandment to love our neighbor. Those who are self-consumed (lacking self-forgetfulness) cannot love, only use. The final warning acknowledges our hearts' desire to make idols of people and things – hoping they will give us what only God can offer: deep and everlasting meaning. What are these stumbling blocks for us? What do we feel we cannot live without? These are our idols.

In the midst of these woes, Habakkuk gives a picture of what repentance looks like. Because we all see ourselves in these warnings. Repentance is more than an acknowledgement of our sin; it means then turning away from that sin, breaking those harmful patterns. It is seeking to live differently – living toward God and for His glory (v14). This means honestly asking ourselves, "Whose praise do I seek?" Each of us desires glory. And we can find ways to receive personal praise now... or live for the glory found in our Father, that we might receive it when it truly matters. For there is only One whose lasting glory fills the heavens and the earth.

Each of us sees violence and injustice all around us, and our hearts cry out. But God sees it too. And the day is coming when He will expose and bring down the wicked, giving justice to the oppressed. He will wipe away our tears and make all things new; the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of His glory. He hears our prayers and delights in His children joining Him in His great mission at the center of human history: to unite all things in Christ.

The prophet offers a vision of the earth quieted and hushed before the presence of the Lord; this is the context of true worship. Every day, God invites us to find a place of silence in the midst of a noisy world and repent our way back into joy and worship our way back into His peace (v20).

Discussion Questions (We realize you will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like.)

- When God responds with an answer to our prayer that is not what we expected (or not to our liking), what are the four things Pastor Wood said we should do according to verses 2:1-4?
- What is the difference between confession and repentance? Why do we need both?
- Give some examples of how we turn God's gifts into idols.
- What is the main issue being addressed by God in each of the five woes or curses of this chapter?
 - Which of these is a temptation that you might have struggled with – even to a small degree?
- Pastor Wood said "We are all on mission, whether we know it or not". What action does this knowledge inspire you to take?

Prayer: *The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.* (Habakkuk 2:20) You might try spending your prayer time in silent worship and prayer together being aware of the Lord's gracious presence. It could be challenging in a virtual meeting, but try it for 10 minutes, (video off?) then share about the experience. This week's prayer guide is found [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Wait, watch, write and obey. Habakkuk was told to write the vision or revelation so others could read it, including us. God wants us to share what we have learned about him with others. If you have studied a biblical topic and gained some insights, share it. If you have struggled through some difficult experiences and in the process learned more about God's character, share it. Have you learned how to have a deepening walk and relationship with God? Share it. Do you keep what you have learned about God to yourself? Steward well and start sharing so others will know too. Think of the many different ways you can go about sharing.