

**Major Messages from the Minor Prophets**  
**Yet, I Will Give Thanks**  
**The Book of Habakkuk**

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**Text Introduction:** This fall we have studied through the Minor Prophets. We come to the end today. The Prophets of the Old Testament are divided by scholars into the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets. More precisely, we call Isaiah, along with Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel, Major Prophets. The terms major and minor refer to the size of these books, not the degree of their importance.<sup>1</sup>

Today, we are studying the Book of Habakkuk. I have saved it for today, because it is a great thanksgiving text.

**Text:** Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there is no fruit 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,  
<sup>18</sup> yet I will triumph in Yahweh;  
I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!  
<sup>19</sup> Yahweh my Lord is my strength;  
He makes my feet like those of a deer  
and enables me to walk on mountain heights!

**Introduction:** It was gratitude that prompted an old man to visit a pier on the coast of Florida every Friday until his death in 1973. Every Friday Captain Eddie Rickenbacker would bring a bucket of shrimp to the beach and feed the sea gulls. Out of thanksgiving, he carried out this Friday routine, because Captain Rickenbacker credited a sea gull with saving his life. Many years before, in 1942, Rickenbacker was on a mission to deliver a message to General Douglas MacArthur in New Guinea. Something went wrong and his plane went down in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Rickenbacker and his crew survived on emergency rafts, but soon they would run short of food. Each day the crew would hold a devotional service. On about the eighth day, they held their devotional service and dozed off for a nap.

This is what happened next in Eddie's own words, "*[Captain] Cherry read the service that afternoon, and we finished with a prayer for deliverance and a hymn of praise. There was some talk, but it tapered off in the oppressive heat. With my hat pulled down over my eyes to keep out some of the glare, I dozed off. Something landed on my head. I knew that it was a sea gull...No one said a word, but peering out from under my hat brim without moving my head, I could see the expression on their faces. They were staring at that gull. The gull meant food...if I could catch it.*"

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<sup>1</sup> Lamentations is considered with these books as a major prophet because it is written by Jeremiah.

Eddie caught the gull. The crew ate the flesh, and the intestines were used as fish bait. Seven of the eight men survived having been out to sea for 22 days.

Don't you just love stories like that? But, all stories don't end that way. The sea gull does not always land, does it? Some of you can give testimony to that right now. That's why I think Habakkuk's story is such a powerful one. Habakkuk's story is a story that at least for the moment has not ended. But please notice the end of the book. Habakkuk is able to say, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord."

To feel the emotion of Habakkuk's experience, we might put Habakkuk's words in a contemporary poem. It might sound something like this:

Though the sugar cane crops yield no sugar  
And the oil wells all dry up  
Even though there may be no money in the bank  
Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord!

Though I share Christ with all my neighbors and family  
But there are no decisions  
And, even though, the Doctor called last week  
And the news is not good

I will put all my faith in the Lord and rejoice in Him!

**What causes this kind of Thanksgiving? One Word: Faith**

***This kind of faith believes at least three things about God.***

***God is always at work!***

*Habakkuk's Questions (1:2-3)*

1. How Long?
2. Why?

Do we ever ask questions like this? How long, God? Why, God? Habakkuk ministered during some of the most difficult times in the nation of Judah. Although, God, through the prophets, had called the nation to repentance repeatedly, the nation stubbornly refused to change. The nation continued in rebellion against God. To someone, like Habakkuk, who continued to walk in obedience, the arrogance against God must have seemed like a slap in the face.

Regardless of the exact nature of our personal difficulties, we almost always end up asking the same questions: "how long" and "why?"

*God's Answer (1:5-11)*

In verse 5 of chapter 1, God begins to speak.

1. We do not see all that God is doing.
2. We cannot understand all that God is doing.

God responds to Habakkuk's questions with two astonishing answers. Astonishing, because God's responses were about the last two things that Habakkuk could have ever believed to be true. God was saying that He was preparing the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, a more wicked people than Israel, to be the deliverers of God's judgment.

And so it is with us, we do not see all that God is doing, because we cannot understand all that God is doing.

**Sometimes, only our faith tells us that God is at work!**

Habakkuk's name in Hebrew means something like "one who embraces" or "one who clings." That's what we must do sometimes—cling to or embrace our faith in God. Sometimes all we have is to cling to our faith.

***God will speak at the right time!***

*The Confidence of the one who knows God will speak (2:1)*

Faith believes that God will speak at the right time. As people of faith, we ought to have confidence in God regardless of what the circumstances may tell us. Habakkuk indicated that he would stand and watch. In this analogy, I see a parallel to our day. How do we stand and watch? We watch God's word. With confidence, we watch God's word, knowing that He will speak at the right time.

*The Contrast of the one who has given up on God speaking (2:4)*

Contrast the confidence of the person of faith to the arrogance of the one who has no faith. That one begins to trust in himself.

*So, What is our response?*

*Watch! Wait! Worship!*

***God will always sustain me! (3:19)***

Why could Habakkuk rejoice? He knew his God. He knew that his God would always sustain him. The Lord would give him strength, that's provision, but He would also cause him not to slip, that's protection. What else could we ask for?

Conclusion:

Faith...it's the key to thanksgiving! God, He's the key to faith!

There are going to be some days when we ask, "How long?" and "Why?" There are going to be some days that we do not see what God is doing. What do we do in those days? We give thanks.