

## **Sermon Text: Habakkuk 3**

### **Sermon Title: "Praying through a Pandemic of Prejudice"**

*Proposition: The faithful must offer prayers of hope to God even when they know social injustices and prejudice will not stop until God chastises the nation who is exacting injustice on its citizens.*

*Thesis: God wants His people to look to Him in prayer even though they may have to endure prolonged injustices and prejudice at the hand of evil people.*

*Antithesis: There is a weariness and loss of faith when rampant injustice continues to plague a nation like a pandemic. Many people turn away from God and stop seeking Him when they do not see Him intervening on behalf of the oppressed. Furthermore, some seek to take matters into their own hands and have an "eye-for-an-eye" attitude.*

*Synthesis: Habakkuk demonstrates how the faithful should pray to God even when the pandemic of prejudice and injustice is ongoing and God's wrath is inevitable.*

*Relevant Question: How do we pray through a pandemic of prejudice and injustice?*

## **Read Habakkuk 3:1 NASB**

### **A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Overview of chapters one and two of Habakkuk. There has been a questioning and answering session going on between Habakkuk and God. Habakkuk has asked God how long He will allow the injustices of the nation to go on. How long He will stay silent and allow the innocent to suffer under the arrogant mistreatment of those in power and control.

God answers but it is not necessarily what Habakkuk wanted to hear. God will deal with the injustices in His time and in His way. In fact, God let Habakkuk know that it will get worse before it gets better.

We are questioning God like Habakkuk questioned God. How long God will you allow this to go on? We are now in a medical and social pandemic. The COVID has recently come on the scene but social

injustice and prejudice has been a pandemic for centuries. God, we need You speak up and do something about it. Yet God either remains quiet or we do not like the answer He gives.

After a back and forth Q&A with God, Habakkuk shifts from questioning to petitioning. He writes a prayer in the form of sad poem if you would. He understands that prayer is better than pitying.

Habakkuk demonstrates how the faithful should pray to God even when the pandemic of prejudice and injustice is ongoing and God's wrath is inevitable.

Relevant Question: How do we pray through a pandemic of prejudice and injustice?

## **BODY**

### **1. A REQUEST FOR GOD'S PROVISION. v.2**

*2 Lord, I have heard the report about You and I fear.  
O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years,  
In the midst of the years make it known;  
In wrath remember mercy.*

We must not avoid praying to an almighty God when things that are out of our control continue to go on. Protest marches are good. Picketing and boycotting are good. Pressuring lawmakers to right the wrongs that have been enacted is good. But all these things must be done with prayer as the foundation.

In times like these, we are challenged to focus on God and not on human beings. Our petition/request should consist of three things:

- a. ***God preserve our life.***
- b. ***God provide us understanding.***
- c. ***God remember your mercy.***
- d. ***Illustration:***

### **2. A REMEMBRANCE OF GOD'S POWER vv. 3-15**

There is a remembrance by way of Scripture of how God demonstrated His glory and power in past times. This remembrance of God's past actions gives us hope and confidence of His future acting.

There is a point of our praying that are remembering the past acts of God turns into future statements about God. When we remember what God has done, we request and claim them as future actions on our behalf. Why? Because He is the same yesterday, today and forever more.

The prophet shows us how to take what God did and say it like He is doing it again. That is a faith statement! We need to request and claim that God:

**a. Shows His Excellent Appearance vv. 3-7**

*3 God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise. 4 His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, And there is the hiding of His power. 5 Before Him goes pestilence, And plague comes after Him. 6 He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. 7 I saw the tents of Cushan under distress, The tent curtains of the land of Midian were trembling.*

Habakkuk recalls from Scripture and oral tradition how God appeared in before His people when they were in Egyptian captivity. We call these "theophanies." God manifesting His excellent and glorious appearance before the oppressed and oppressors. We need to ask God to show Himself in some way to the hurting and the hurters.

**b. Use the Elements of the Earth vv. 8-11**

*8 Did the Lord rage against the rivers, Or was Your anger against the rivers, Or was Your wrath against the sea, That You rode on Your horses, On Your chariots of salvation? 9 Your bow was made bare, The rods of chastisement were sworn. Selah.*

*You cleaved the earth with rivers. 10 The mountains saw You and quaked; The downpour of waters swept by. The deep uttered forth its voice, It lifted high its hands. 11 Sun and moon stood in their places; They went away at the light of Your arrows, At the radiance of Your gleaming spear.*

Habakkuk remembers how God split the Red Sea and the Jordan River and how He sent water out of the rocks when they the Hebrews were wondering in the wilderness. He recalled from his scripture reading how the mountains quaked at the presence of the God and the Sun and moon stood still as Joshua fought the battle. God is so awesome and powerful that even the elements of the earth are submissive to will and presence.

And that is what we need to ask God to do. We need to ask God use the earth and the universe to make Himself known and allow the world to see that He is God. And evil person may deny or dismiss your power but they cannot deny the God as He manifests it through nature.

**c. *Punish the Evils of the Earth vv.12-15***

*12 In indignation You marched through the earth; In anger You trampled the nations. 13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people, For the salvation of Your anointed. You struck the head of the house of the evil To lay him open from thigh to neck. Selah. 14 You pierced with his own spears The head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those Who devour the oppressed in secret. 15 You trampled on the sea with Your horses, On the surge of many waters.*

d. Illustration:

**3. A RESOLUTION OF GOD'S PROTECTION vv. 16-19**

*16 I heard and my inward parts trembled, At the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, And in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, For the people to arise who will invade us. 17 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, 18 Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. 19 The Lord God is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' feet, And makes me walk on my high places.*

This is where are prayer and petition turn to praise and adoration. Habakkuk understood that things were not going to get better but perhaps they were going to get worse. So, he resolved in himself to trust in God's protection and divine purpose.

When we resolve to trust in God's protection and divine purpose, three things happen:

- a. ***We Embrace Our Reality vv. 16-17***
- b. ***We are Enthusiastic in our Rejoicing v 18***
- c. ***We are Expectant in our Redemption v19***
- d. ***Illustration:***

Close/Call to Action/Connect to Christ

As I grow older, I understand better the words, phrase and expressions of my ancestors. Even though I did not grow up as a Christian or spend lots of time in church, I would still hear my parents and grandparents say, "The Lord will make a way somehow."

I would hear them say, "Weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning."

I would hear them say, "I am yet holding on."

Now I understand what they meant. So, I can read the scripture a whole lot differently.

I understand David when he wrote, "I would have fainted had I not believe that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

I understand Jeremiah better when he said, "They that hope in the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

I am expecting God to see us through this pandemic of prejudice and injustice. I am expecting God to deal with wicked and evil that pervades our nation and world. I am expecting God show Himself mighty in our midst.

But until He does, I will keep on trusting, keep on serving, keep on singing, keep on shouting...