

September 6, 2026 - Habakkuk 2:1-4 - "Living in the Waiting"

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[0:00] If you could turn in your Bibles to Habakkuk! We will be reading, starting in chapter 2!

Verse 1 says, I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what He will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaints.

And the Lord answered me, write the vision, make it plain on tablets so He may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits its appointed time.

It hastens to the end. It will not die. It will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come.

It will not delay. Behold, His soul is puffed up. It is not upright within Him. But the righteous shall live by His faith.

[1:31] This is God's Word. Thanks be to God. We are continuing our series and our time through Habakkuk here.

And just trying to get my clicker going. Worst case scenario, we're going to test our guys on the slides back there. It's all you back there.

All right. Yeah, we're continuing our series in Habakkuk. And I believe that last week we started really developing the theme of Habakkuk and everything that is going on within the heart and the mind of this man who is waiting for the Lord and very confused around who God is, who He knows God to be, and what He sees all around.

And it just does not line up. And last week we left Habakkuk at the watch post. And he had wrestled with God with what he was doing.

He knew that Judah, the nation, the tribe of Judah around him needed something, needed correction, needed judgment. But he couldn't reconcile how the means of that judgment was going to be through the wicked nation of Babylon.

[3:09] It would be the Chaldeans, soon to be known as the Babylonians in biblical history. And yet before Habakkuk took his stand at the watch post, what did he do last week that we saw?

He planted his feet on the rock. Before he went and positioned himself to a place where he could receive word from the Lord and to watch and wait, he planted his feet upon the rock.

That was the main point of the sermon last week. And toward the end of the sermon, I sort of closed on something that hit me as I was preaching. It's very odd how some of those things happen and pan out.

But I ended the sermon on something that stood out to me. And it was just this simple two words, wait well. Wait well. But then as I'm looking at the passage today, I'm like, well, I probably should have explained that a little bit.

Because that needs a little bit of context. How to wait well. Because after all, waiting can, you know, we hear spiritual language, like we're waiting on the Lord and things like that.

[4:25] And, you know, and it can sound very spiritual sounding way of sort of giving license to do nothing. License to be lazy.

License to not make a decision. Because you're just waiting on the Lord. And people will lean on that crutch. Or even worse, to wait. Waiting can often bring in our minds and in our hearts worrying. Waiting can bring speculation. Waiting can bring a season of catastrophizing every possible outcome of the situation. Waiting can entail distracting ourselves.

Waiting can often, sometimes we get impatient in waiting and we start to force an outcome. Or deciding that, well, since God hasn't acted yet, God must not be acting at all.

And I gotta do something about this. But I said, wait well. Habakkuk 2, 1 through 4, shows us that biblical waiting is anything but empty space.

[5:34] Biblical waiting is anything but empty space. Thinking through the progression, Habakkuk has planted his feet. He's taken his post in this watch post.

And now God teaches him how to remain there. The text today will reinforce the simple point. While you wait, live by faith in what God has spoken. While you wait, live by faith in what God has spoken.

And what's gonna unfold today is four verses. I just decided to do four sections. I'm just gonna go verse by verse. And we're gonna look at while you wait throughout these four verses. We'll see while you wait to listen humbly in the first verse. While you wait in the second verse, hold fast to God's word. While we wait in the third verse, trust God's appointed time.

[6:38] And then finally, and most emphatically in this passage, while you wait in verse four, live by faith. I have a sermon title today.

I did change it. Living in the waiting. Living in the waiting. And as we go through this verse by verse, I want us to pause for a moment and do the most important thing that we could ever do before we enter God's word together.

And that's prayer. Prayer for the Holy Spirit to just help our minds and our hearts to comprehend what he has for us today.

For us to be open to challenge. But also, soften our hearts so that we may be encouraged. So let's turn to the Lord in prayer and ask for those very things.

Lord, we come to you this morning. We ask desperately to hear your voice today. Father, we need you to speak. And while I am an under-shepherd of your word, I don't add or take away to anything that you've already spoken.

[7:53] I'm just a messenger. Help me to deliver what you have spoken today. And let it be a burden on our hearts. Let it be something that may be ingested as bitter but so sweet to our souls.

Feed us now, Lord. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. The first section is in verse 1. While you wait, and this is simply something we saw develop last week is to listen humbly.

We spent a considerable amount of time with the image last week of entering the watch post. If you missed that sermon, it's online and it's available out there but I think our best, the best use of our time is that I don't re-preach verse 1.

So I don't intend to do that but I do want us to hone in on something different. A little bit different in the angle of this verse today. He says in verse 1, look, I will look out to see what he will say to me. Now, we have to remember through chapter 1, Habakkuk has spent a lot of time talking. He's been talking a lot and saying some really difficult things.

[9:19] Almost like questioning God and God's ways. It just doesn't make sense. He can't stop speaking and he stops here and he listens.

After planting his feet on the rock, entering this position and this posture of waiting, he begins to listen and you see, waiting well definitely means knowing when to stop speaking and become teachable before God.

Quit yapping, right? And just be teachable before the Lord. The final phrase is very interesting too because you see this teachable spirit that Habakkuk has.

He says to hear what I will answer concerning my complaint. The Hebrew word here can carry the idea that he's awaiting reproof.

He's awaiting rebuke. He's awaiting argument. And so, in fact, it comes with the same word family as we saw in chapter 1, verse 12 when he said Babylon has been established for Judah's correction.

[10:36] Same word family used here. He's waiting to, he's gonna, what I will answer concerning my complaints. What I will answer. How I may be rebuked or corrected in this.

And so, Habakkuk may say, may be saying more than, well, I'm gonna wait for God to answer my complaints as if he might have things right. But he's actually saying I will answer for, I will listen for God's answer even if God corrects me and leaves me in tears over what he's gonna say to me.

Church, that's humility. We see something in Angle and his posture in this watch post after planting his feet on the rock. He is in his post watching diligently and waiting humbly.

He is filled with humility. Sometimes when we ask God why, have you ever asked God that? Why? I mean, basically any breaking news right now that you can search right now, I'm asking God why literally all week.

Really? Three kids strangled? You know, it's not any news to you guys. We live in this digital world. We know when news happens, right at the moment it happens, it's toxic for our minds.

[12:06] We ask God a lot why. But what we really mean is, I think sometimes, and I'm talking about myself as well, that I want God to explain to me why my interpretation of this situation is correct.

I want God to validate the vileness of what I'm seeing when I say why. But, we see something different in Habakkuk's life here.

You see, biblical faith is teachable enough to pray something like, Lord, I may not only need explanation over this, but I may very well need correction in all of this.

That's humility. Waiting well, as it were from my closing remark last week, waiting well is humble waiting.

It is humble waiting. And Habakkuk positions himself to here. He's looking out, he's waiting, and verse two begins, praise the Lord.

[13:18] The Lord comes in. The Lord answered me. And we see in the second verse here, the second section, while you wait, hold fast to God's word. Habakkuk has been trying to make sense of God's providence, and notice how God responds to his confused faith.

God speaks. He speaks. In other words, God doesn't tell Habakkuk, well, how about while you're waiting, Habakkuk, just think a little bit harder, and a little bit deeper about Babylon, a little bit longer, search deep within Simba, right?

Search yourself. I don't know where that came from. But he doesn't tell Habakkuk that he needs to have self-sufficient enlightenment, knowledge about the situation.

No, he needed something outside of his circumstance, being God, to speak into his circumstance. The whole time Habakkuk can't figure out God's purpose is simply by staring harder at his circumstance.

I don't know about you, I haven't figured anything more out about the news by looking more at the news. Just leaves me more confused. So God has to reveal what these circumstances mean and he says here, write a vision.

[14:47] Write a vision. Write the revelation. Put it on record. Make it clear and make it plain. You see, God answers his, God wants his answer fixed here.

He wants it readable. He wants it understandable. Communicable. And regardless exactly of how we sort of interpret the phrase, I saw a couple different smart old men write a couple perspectives of so he may read, so he may run who reads it, whether it's the heralding of the message that they're taking off running, or it's something where he's, like, you ever try to jog and try to read at the same time?

It doesn't work very well. You know, so you can run and read it, so you can be reading it on the go. There's many different perspectives of that, but I think the point is clear here.

So he may run who reads it, is simply that God's word is not to remain inside Habakkuk's private experience in his watch post.

text. That word is to go out, and it's to be communicated, it's to be written. And so church, stand back for a moment, because what does God put in Habakkuk's hand while he's waiting?

[16:17] waiting? He puts his word in his hands. And that matters. This is a critical aspect of waiting well, because when we do not know what God is doing, we are experts, PhD experts at filling in the blanks of what God's doing, and we're always wrong.

Right? it's like we go to the Lord and we say, well, God hasn't told me why, so I'm just going to decide why. God hasn't told me when, so I'll just predict when.

Maybe I'm wrong, most likely I'm wrong. God hasn't told me what happens next, so I'm just going to imagine the worst.

After all, it will make me pray more, right? So win-win, I guess. No, this is how we fill in the blanks ourselves. This is the travesty that waiting has for us when we wait poorly.

But Habakkuk is redirected away from what we can speculate about towards what God has actually spoken. And this is so instructive for us in our day today.

[17:37] We must resist the urge to fill God's silence with our speculations. Waiting well means filling our waiting with God's word.

Filling our waiting with God's word. Maybe even if this makes sense to you, waiting well is word-shaped waiting. waiting. And what does that word finally tell Habakkuk?

Well, surprise, not everything that he really wanted to know. God gives him the hardest commands, I think, ever known to man. God essentially says, keep waiting.

And we see that in verse 3. He says, He says, for still the vision awaits. It's a point in time. It hastens to the end.

It will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. It will not delay. And so what we see here is while you wait, trust God's appointed time.

[18:52] What a revelation that is for him to write down. What a revelation. Habakkuk has waited for an answer and God essentially says, keep waiting.

It's pretty hard living in a prime culture of feeling like a package is taken forever because it's on its third day of going through snail mail, right?

Or maybe that is a personal problem with me. I think we share the same sentiment. This verse is saturated in language of time and I think that it's important for us to pick that up.

Look at this, this language. It says, awaits. It's a point in time. It hastens to the end.

It will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come. It will not delay.

[19:56] It's not going to be late. It's coming. You have to wait. But it's going to come to an end. And this matters because Habakkuk began this entire book of asking the Lord, how long?

Right? And now, God finally addresses that question of time and actually tells Habakkuk something way better than he could have ever imagined.

although that he is told Habakkuk to keep waiting, he tells him, there is an appointed time. There is an appointed time.

Like, that's to say that history isn't drifting towards some uncertain conclusion in the future. No, God's purposes have an appointment commitment, and one day it will all make sense.

You see, Habakkuk doesn't know when, but God does. And the Hebrew is quite vivid, saying hastens to the end. The verb used here can carry the picture of panting, of breathing heavily.

[21:08] Do you see the picture? It's almost as this promise that has an appointed time, that has an end date. it's like a runner straining toward the finish line.

Ask any runner after running this exhaustive race how they're doing on that last hundred meters. How you doing? I feel like death, right?

Panting, breathing heavily. It's hard. It's exhaustive. But the race is worth it. it.

So Habakkuk looks around and concludes, well, nothing is happening, Lord. It's just getting worse.

And God says, in effect, my promise is already moving towards its appointed end. Just like we sang in the nursery, he's got the whole world in his hands.

[22:07] And he certainly does. furthermore, God piles on this assurance upon reassurance upon reassurance.

It has an appointed time. It's moving toward the end. It will not lie. It will surely come. It will not be late. And if it seems slow, wait for it.

Those ideas aren't contradictory of one another. There's a difference between feeling like something is delayed, like you're coming through Amazon on its third day.

But there's something also that exists of something actually arriving late. You can feel like something is delayed, but then there's also the reality of it, that it's actually not delayed.

Things are unfolding according to someone else's timeline. You see, God does not promise Habakkuk that fulfillment of what is coming is going to feel quick.

[23:16] He's not necessarily trying to appeal to how Habakkuk feels. He doesn't say, that's okay, it's going to be all right. No, his reassurance is actually in that there is an appointed time to come.

But his promises that, he promises Habakkuk here, that fulfillment will not be late, and that church often requires this different kind of surrender, I believe.

Because we often talk about submitting to God's will. Well, I'm just trying to submit to God's will in my life, right? But sometimes faith also means submitting to God's timetable.

And we can't necessarily separate the two. Because we say it often to one another maybe, or maybe even in our hearts, we say that I trust what you're doing, and then we put that little clause.

But I really need you to do this by Tuesday at 4 p.m. Right? That's how we do it.

[24:31] We think God is slow. That God doesn't know what's going on and what's at stake. Peter uses a similar language here in 2 Peter 3.9.

He says, the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness. And we often count slowness and consider it as a reality in our walks with the Lord.

We have to remember that what looks slow from our perspective is never forgetfulness of God. Church, God's promise may tarry, may tarry from where you stand, but it never, it will never miss the time that God has appointed ever.

forever. Now comes the obvious question, God's promises. Sure, and God's timetable belongs to God.

We ought to be asking Habakkuk here in this text, well, how am I supposed to live until then? What am I supposed to do? Verse 4 is the answer.

[25:48] And in many ways, God answers him in a way that provides a theological center for the entire book. And let's look at verse 4 a little bit, where we see, while you wait, live by faith.

God places two ways to live side by side here. It's a little confusing, at least in English. It's pretty clear in Hebrew.

basically he puts forward two people. There's a proud person and there's a righteous person in verse 4.

And obviously Babylon is this immediate illustration of the first he in this verse that we see. Behold, his soul is puffed up.

It is not upright within him. Speaking of Babylon. Babylon. And so, after all, Babylon looks incredibly powerful, very impressive externally. By every metric of visual confirmation, Babylon is something to be scared of.

[27:00] But God says something is really off inside, something is crooked inside. Remember, back to chapter 1 verse 7, Babylon's justice comes from himself.

self. And a little bit further in verse 11 of chapter 1, Babylon's strength is his God. So, in other words, Babylon's entire existence is built upon self-reliance.

Self-reliance. My strength, my judgments, my timetable, my resources, my ability to control the outcome.

that is a way to live. You can live that way. Right? And Habakkuk could respond to uncertainty in the same way and just say, well, you know what, I'm getting down from this watch post, this is ridiculous, I'm just going to go and just do something bad that I'm going to regret.

But he could decide, though, a contrast here. Comes here's the contrast. We see that word but here in a positive sense, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

[28:21] Or maybe to sound, but the righteous shall live by his faithfulness or his steadfastness. It's like a steadfast trusting that keeps on trusting, keeps on keeping on.

You see, church, this is not merely believing that God exists in the cosmos of all creation. No, this is remaining faithful. It's remaining faithful to God when you can't see the fulfillment of what he's spoken, when you can't see the end, when everything looks like a mess, but somehow God is putting this mess together.

In other words, faith is how the righteous live in the gap between God's promise and God's appointed time, faith. And notice how verse three and four fit together pretty well.

It's like verse three, if we can surmise verse three, it's basically wait for it, wait for it. Naturally, we gotta ask, okay, how? How do we wait for it?

Well, then verse four, well, the righteous shall live by faith. Not by our understanding, not by understanding everything, not by controlling everything, not by theorizing or looking deep within yourself, right, or forcing an outcome, but by faith.

[29:47] And church, this little sentence that we see here, the righteous shall live by faith, is like, this is one of the greatest statements in the gospel and that we see throughout the New Testament, woven throughout.

Paul uses it, announces it in Romans 1.16. He says, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because in the gospel, quote, the righteous of God is revealed, the righteous shall live by faith.

Not in the pridefulness and the puffed upness like in your own strength and your own self-sufficiency, no, the righteous shall live by faith. Habakkuk's sentence becomes part of Paul's explanation of the gospel itself, doesn't it?

In Galatians 3, verse 11, Paul does it again. He says, it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law for the righteous shall live by faith.

And then Paul immediately turns to Jesus Christ. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. You see, the proud person says that I will establish myself.

[31:05] But the gospel says that you can't. You can't establish yourself. You can look impressive and be completely bankrupt within your heart.

You can't make yourself more righteous. You can't make yourself righteous at all. You can't establish your standing between God through your performance in your life.

Jesus Christ bore the curse for sinners and we receive Jesus Christ by faith. The righteous shall live by faith. Not how much, not by taking communion.

As wonderful of a reminder and symbol and sign and symbol as that is. You don't live by taking communion. He doesn't say live by getting baptized. He doesn't say live by writing a really hefty check and put it in the red offering box.

No, the righteous shall live by faith. Faith. Faith. Where am I at?

[32:12] Faith. I think perhaps maybe the New Testament passage that brings this, brings us closest to Habakkuk's waiting, is the situation unfolding in Hebrews 10.

Hebrews, the context of Hebrews is written to Christians under pressure. We've just been studying this at the men's breakfast and we've been going through Hebrews and these Christians are under pressure.

Jesus has come, he's risen at this point and yet Jesus Christ has not yet returned. And these Christians are tempted to shrink back, to denounce everything, to kind of just say, all right, I don't know when, but I don't know, this is getting pretty interesting.

And so the author of Hebrews says, you have need of endurance. And Habakkuk tells them in Habakkuk 2, he uses Habakkuk 2 as a contextual bridge to the waiting that they are in.

He says, yet a little while in the book of Hebrews, yet a little while in the coming one will come and will not delay, but my righteous one shall live by faith.

[33:37] We are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but are those who have faith and preserve our souls. Do you see how the Bible brings this all together?

Habakkuk asks, how does the righteous person live when the world does not make sense and God's promise has not been fulfilled?

Well, the answer is faith. Paul asks, how can an unrighteous sinner ever stand righteous before a holy God?

Paul says, by faith in Christ. The author of Hebrews asks, how does a Christian endure in Jesus Christ until the end? By faith.

And together as we see this unfold and we see this rhythm and this reverberation of faith woven through Scripture, we see a life of faith is from beginning to end.

[34:43] That by faith we come to Jesus Christ, by faith we are sustained by Jesus Christ, and by our faith we will one day be reunited with Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to bear our curse, Jesus has been raised from the dead, and Jesus is coming again.

And so while we wait, church, we don't shrink back. We live by faith. maybe this might be an invitation for anybody who is not in Jesus Christ, who is trying to live out this performance based salvation that it's all dependent upon what you do in your life.

And the control, and it almost gets to a point of the prideful image of Babylon being puffed up in how you have done this in order to receive merit from God, and that it can be counted to you as righteousness, I think today offers a very, very important invitation for you to lay your questions down and live today and wait well with all of us who are waiting.

Church, last week we ask what must happen before you wait. It's very important before you wait to plant your feet upon the rock.

Today, Habakkuk answers another question. How do you live while you wait? We see it. Live, listen humbly, hold fast to God's word, trust in God's appointed time, and live by faith.

[36:31] See, waiting isn't just this empty space between God's promise and God's appointed time. Waiting is actually where faith lives, where faith sustains, where faith guides, where faith guards.

It's by faith all of you in Christ today live and will endure. While you wait, live by faith in what God has spoken. Live by faith in what God has spoken.

We may not know all the whys. I need to tell myself constantly. We might not always know the whens or the how God's promise can possibly come to pass through situations, but God has spoken and his word will not lie and his promise will never be laid.

And the one who came once to redeem his people is coming again and we wait by faith. We are not of those who shrink back.
We live by faith in what God has spoken. Let's pray.