

October 18, 2026 - Habakkuk 3:1-15 - "A Song for an Uncertain Future"

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Date: 18 October 2026

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[0:00] A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet according to Shigionoth. O Lord, I have heard and report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear.

In the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.

His splendor covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light. Rays flashed from his hand, and there he veiled his power.

Before him went pestilence, and plague followed at his heels. He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations.

Then the eternal mountains were scattered. The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of Kushan in affliction.

[1:13] The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord? Was your anger against the rivers?

Or your indignation against the sea? When you rode on your horses, on your chariot of salvation? You stripped the seas of your bow, calling for many arrows.

You split the earth with rivers. The mountains saw you and writhed. The raging waters swept on. The deep gave forth its voice.

It lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their place. At the light of your arrows as they sped.

At the flash of your glittering spear. You marched through the earth in fury. You threshed the nations in anger.

[2:14] You went out for the salvation of your people. For the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked. Laying him bare from thigh to neck.

You pierced with his own arrows the head of his warriors. Who came like a whirlwind to scatter me. Rejoicing as if to devour the poor in secret.

You trampled the sea with your horses. The surging of mighty waters. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Good morning church. Good morning. It's great to see everyone here today. And for those who are at a distance right now.

Good morning to you as well. We're getting into the end of the book of Habakkuk. And we have spent quite some time in this book.

[3:20] This little book. Who would have thought. But the Lord has been ministering to, I believe, all of our hearts. And all of our lives. And my heart as well.

And there are moments in life when the hardest thing about tomorrow is knowing just enough about what is coming to be afraid.

Knowing just enough. Seeing just enough of what's to come. That's usually the hardest thing about tomorrow. And it's those times where we receive news that we never wanted to hear.

It's those times where we watch something familiar within our lives begin to completely fall apart. It's those times we recognize that circumstances are moving in a direction that's far beyond any of our control.

And it's about to get wild. And naturally we begin to ask questions as we think about tomorrow. Like what is going to happen?

[4:35] Or how are we going to get through this? Or why is God allowing this? Or what if the outcome that we've been praying for so fervently doesn't come to pass?

Now, there's uncertainty. Uncertainty frightens us, I believe. But maybe at other times what we actually know is coming is all the more frightening.

And that's where Habakkuk is within this chapter. Throughout our study in Habakkuk, back to chapter 1, we've heard a prophet wrestling with questions like these.

He began to cry out to God about the wickedness and injustice that surrounded him and his own people. And he wanted God to do something about that evil.

And then midway through chapter 1, God answered him that he would use wicked Babylon, wicked means to accomplish his sovereign purpose.

[5:49] But then, at the end of chapter 1, that answer raised even greater struggle for Habakkuk.

Like how could a holy God use wickedness like that? And then in chapter 2, the Lord spoke again, revealing more of his purposes and assuring the prophet that evil would never have the last word.

And we saw that as we broke all those woes individually, one at a time, within five sermons. And we saw that each one, evil will not have the last word.

But at the center of this book, there's something absolutely marvelous, instructive to us. Before the woes, Habakkuk does something.

He goes to his watch post. He waits literally to be corrected if needed. And at the center of all of God's difficult revelation to him was this watch post declaration that we've returned to repeatedly.

[7:08] It goes, but the righteous shall live by faith. And last week, we finished our in-depth study of those five woes.

And we landed on how living by faith sometimes brings us to a place of just shutting up and trusting. Where we've asked every question we can possibly ask.

And God has spoken to us in many different ways. And it's gotten to the point where we simply just have to trust, to be silent.

But the righteous shall live by faith. And now we start chapter three, where Habakkuk finally responds to the Lord's woes, to the judgments, to the oracles against the evil nation.

And he responds, not in a petition. He responds in prayer. And actually a song.

[8:15] It's beautiful. You see, this is something remarkably, remarkable here, remarkable here. Habakkuk's circumstances have not changed at all.

The enemy is still doing what the enemy does. Tomorrow, the enemy is going to be dealt with. But Habakkuk is stuck between the already and the not yet.

Nothing in this situation has changed. But now, instead of asking God another question, the prophet begins rehearsing what he already knows about the Lord.

He goes into his commentary shelf, to his theology book sections, and recalls what he knows about the Lord.

And he sings. Isn't this one of the most wonderful things about worship, about singing, like, together, even this morning? Like, we sing about the Lord's goodness when life is difficult, when we can barely even utter any words from our mouths.

[9:27] But we also sing when life is wonderful. It's a timeless, it's a timeless and instructive moment for the gathered church and worship.

But we see that God is worthy to be praised in every season, every season, good or bad. And so whether you're facing an uncertain tomorrow or enjoying in a particularly good season, where we got some winds going on, I mean, the Wick Avenue Bridge is open, praise the Lord.

How about that? Woo-hoo! Habakkuk's song has the power to shape how we understand the ever-changing world around us.

There is something that we need to fix ourselves upon when this ever-changing world is doing its thing and swirling around us.

And that leads to the main point of the passage today, that certainty of God's saving work in the past is the anchor of our faith in an uncertain future.

[10:31] Certainty of God's saving work in the past is the anchor of our faith in an uncertain future. Sermon title today is a song for an uncertain future.

And I'm going to break this into three sections. And I'd like to pray as we listen to the prophet's song and consider what he remembers about the Lord.

Let's pray. Amen. Lord, we humbly come before you. Knowing that you are God and we are not.

If we are here today thinking that we have everything in control, humble us today. You are God and we are not.

Help us to submit ourselves to the authority of your word today. Let it be instructive to us, edifying, convicting.

[11:41] Let your word have its way in all of our hearts, in my hearts as well. We pray for the Holy Spirit to do this mightily in these next moments of our time together.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I'm going to go along with the musical emphasis of this passage.

And we're going to think about this as music in stanzas. So not section one. We'll just go with stanza one. And the melody from stanza one may go along the lines of, I heard of your works and trembled.

I heard of your works and trembled. And we see this from verse one through two. Chapter three begins with a prayer. And the structure of this whole chapter is musical.

And that's what a lot of commentaries, a lot older, wiser men who have studied these scriptures conclude. That's based on the top and the tail of the passage of this entire chapter, chapter three, verse one all the way to verse 19, where we see this odd word, shiggy on us, or however you want to pronounce it.

[13:02] It's kind of like a musical word, you know, getting shiggy with it. It might be. That word has been debated for a while. There's no real meaning of that word.

So a lot of commentaries agree that it is a musical cue. It's a musical cue because the end of the passage ends with a cue for instrumentation to play and continue to play.

And so it's fairly agreed upon that this is a musical cue for the song for anyone singing it to get shiggy with it.

And that's significance. I want you to think about it. This prophet who previously cried out in confusion, confused prophet of God. That's not a good situation to have.

The prophet who previously cried out in confusion now gives an entire congregation on a silver platter words to which they can worship God.

[14:07] And how does the song begin? Well, listen to the words of verse 2 here. Oh, Lord, I have heard the report of you.

And your work, oh, Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years, revive it. In the midst of the years, make it known. In wrath, remember mercy.

Habakkuk acknowledges hearing of God's work and trembling before him, having fear before him. This is reverent fear.

And we've got to consider what he's doing here. He's essentially reaching back into history of God's dealings with his people and brings those mighty works into his present worship.

It's reaching back so that it can reach forward. I mean, Habakkuk knows judgment is coming. He knows what's coming. The Lord revealed it.

[15:14] So obviously, there's a lot of fear in that of how holy God truly is. And yet he asked God to revive his work and make it known, adding this remarkable petition, in wrath, remember mercy.

The sound of Habakkuk's voice echoes throughout the passages of Scripture all the way back to Moses in Exodus 34, 6 through 7, where God declared his mercy.

This is a self-declaration. His mercy, his grace, his righteousness in judgment. This is who God is. And do you hear it?

In wrath, remember mercy. Habakkuk knows the Lord's character as it's been revealed in Scripture of days of old.

And that knowledge gives him reason to pray even when he trembles at the uncertainty of the future. Talking about prayer today, I think it was very, very organized by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[16:30] I wish I could say we coordinated, but we did not. And so even furthermore, with the time where we studied the acrostic ACTS acts, I think this is an important lesson about prayer.

And Micah already said it, so I don't want to beat a dead horse here. But we often approach prayer sort of with the S's, supplications, right?

We run to God with this list of to-dos. And what we'd like God to do. And there's nothing wrong with bringing our desires to him. It would be very legalistic for me to say, well, you've got to do it in this order, in this fashion, that's the only way your prayers are heard from the Lord.

Like, no, that's not what we're saying. That was a good voice too. There's nothing wrong with bringing our desires to the Lord.

Remember, pray without ceasing, as Paul said to the Thessalonians. But Scripture encourages us to do exactly that. But Habakkuk shows us something else worth remembering.

[17:45] It's not just about lists. Prayer is an opportunity to remember who we're speaking to. That's the glory of the A of Acts.

That's the glory of adoration, of the magnificence of God. Prayer is an opportunity to remember who we're speaking to.

The God who hears our requests is the same God who revealed himself to be merciful in Exodus 34, to be gracious in Exodus 34, to be holy as it was revealed in Exodus 34, to be faithful in Exodus 34.

Same God. But we have to remember that Habakkuk is trembling, and he's still identifying the great majesty and power of God.

Maybe a trembling prayer is a trusting prayer. Yeah. What a prayer.

[18:54] What a song. Habakkuk anchors his prayer in the character of God even while struggling to understand God's purposes.

Talk about spiritual maturity. That's it. That's faith. And church, I think we need to learn to do the same, to be striving in this manner, to be doing the same.

Like, we should, when somebody's suffering, we should plead to God as the healer to heal.

Should. When circumstances overwhelm us, we can ask the deliverer to deliver. We're going into God's work of the past and asking God to presently work that out.

And even when life is going well, when we got those wins, we ought to be just as eager to praise the giver for His generosity.

[20:05] So we see in all seasons, this is the same. Let me press, though, for a moment in all of our hearts because how much of our prayer life is shaped by what we know about God or what we desire Him to know about us?

Do we only speak to Him when we actually need something? Sort of like the spiritual vending machine. You put the quarter in and hopefully get the blessing to come out.

Do we remember to thank Him when things are going well? And have we begun measuring His goodness by whether He grants the outcomes that we desire?

See, Habakkuk teaches us to pray with confidence in God's character and entrust our requests in His wisdom.

So many of us sort of tether our prayers. If you can get kind of some imagery here, tethering our prayers, saying like, well, I expect to get something in return, but our prayer life should be just a boomerang to God and releasing control and saying, Lord, if you return this in our favor, praise the Lord.

[21:21] If you don't, praise the Lord. Don't tether your prayers. Even if the healer doesn't heal, He is the healer.

Even if the deliverer doesn't deliver, He is the deliverer. His ways are not our ways. And there's something to love about Habakkuk.

He just prayed that God would make His work known, sort of in the present, make His work known. But now in the verses that follow this, from verse 3 all the way to 7, He begins singing about the mighty works God has already made known.

Listen to where the song takes us next, and very much so, a lot of past tense. We see in stanza 2, Your glory shook the earth.

And we see that from verse 3 to verse 7. In verse 3 and 4, Habakkuk now describes an extraordinary appearance of God.

[22:36] And just look at the descriptions in your Bibles. Like His glory covers the heavens. His splendor radiates like sunlight.

The nations tremble before Him. Like, whoa. That's big. What an extraordinary picture here.

What an extraordinary reality. What an extraordinary truth. And remember, Habakkuk is drawing upon the language and imagery of God's mighty works throughout Israel's history.

And so let's follow this song and what he's doing here. Let's follow this song through Israel's history.

He sings of Taman and Mount Paran in verse 3, recalling upon God's appearance at Sinai, which this is to make no mistake of what happens in Exodus 19 and as what's, which is recorded in Deuteronomy 33 where there was thunder, there was lightning and trembling.

Not only was mankind trembling, but the mountain was trembling. all while accompanying God's descent into this world.

[24:05] The poetic imagery continues to recall the plagues in Egypt in verse 5. Well, in verse 6 and 7 describe the earth and surrounding nations as trembling before God.

The earth trembles before God in verse 6. In verse 7, the nations tremble before God. All creation trembles before this holy God.

What a magnificent celebration of God's majesty. Habakkuk is singing about the God whose glory fills the heavens and whose power extends down upon a trembling earth.

heaven and earth proclaim the glory of God. And notice the striking contrast in verse 6.

It says, He stood and measured the earth. He looked and shook the nations. Then the eternal mountains, think about that, eternal mountains were scattered.

[25:15] The everlasting hills sank low. His were the everlasting ways. I want you to think about that. The ancient, these eternal mountains completely crumble and the everlasting hills The everlasting hills sink low.

Yet God's ways are everlasting. I mean, think about what's being said here. Mountains are as permanent as it gets, at least in my opinion.

Have you ever driven through the Appalachian Mountains or gotten the opportunity to see, you know, the Colorado and the mountains out there? Man, like, these are magnificent.

It doesn't get more permanent than mountains. And so, what's this saying? All of them, every one, no matter how great and vast and beautiful as they are, all of them are subject to the eternal God who can bring to dust even the tallest mountain.

Consider the setting. Habakkuk is surrounded by some news, isn't he? News of distress. Habakkuk is receiving news of an uncertain future, but certain that it's going to be difficult.

[26:40] and he could choose to rehearse how powerful the enemy is. God, you don't know Babylon like I do.

You don't know what I'm going through how I do. This is going to be horrible. Why are we doing it this way? He could have rehearsed that, but instead he chose to rehearse how powerful God is and always has been.

He makes a choice here. In church, we need this kind of perspective in every season of our lives. When circumstances are difficult, we're reminded that things which frighten us always remain subject to God, Yahweh.

But even when life is good, there's still something important for us to remember. For instance, when our health is in shape, when our homes are together, when our families are not fighting and just getting along, whatever that means, and our accomplishments are just stacking up, the opportunities that we've been given, all of these things are just wonderful gifts of God.

And every one of them should lead us to praise God, the giver of those things. But here's where the passage really presses us. This is where it hits us because have we become impressed with the things that God has given us and sort of lost this amazement in God Himself.

[28:20] We've sort of stacked up all the accomplishments, all the great family that we've acquired, our wonderful family that we've built and stuff, our home, and maybe our health.

how easily we celebrate the blessings while overlook the glory of the one who blesses. Habakkuk invites us to lift our eyes higher.

Lift your eyes higher than the gifts that He has given. The blessings of God should deepen our wonder at the God who blesses, especially the more you figure out how unworthy we truly are because of the issue of sin in our lives that we struggle with.

And when those earthly things we've been given begin to shake, this is the test. When those things begin to shake, we can remember that the God who gives them and has given them remains faithful.

So no matter what season of life you're in right now, we have a reason to join Habakkuk celebrating the Lord's glory over all things. But you gotta listen.

[29:41] Habakkuk's song is still building towards something that's even greater than that. He's celebrated already God's glorious presence in these magnificent ways, and now he begins recalling upon God's mighty acts deliverance, not just shaking mountains, but parting waters.

And we see that in this last stanza here. Before next week we'll get to the chorus. But you might hear on this stanza that you went out to save your people.

And we see this from verse 8 to verse 15. Habakkuk begins to describe God as a divine warrior. And there's a lot of imagery here.

And so let me just highlight a couple things that he's reinforcing. Like in verse 8, this divine warrior is advancing with chariots.

This divine warrior in verse 9 is wielding weapons as a soldier. this divine warrior is defeating his enemies.

[30 : 55] And we see that in verse 10 all the way to 15. Let's just read it. The mountains saw you and writhed and raging waters swept on.

The deep gave forth its voice. It lifted its hands on high. The sun and the moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped at the flash of your glittering spear.

You marched through the earth in fury and you thresh the nations in anger.

You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed. You crushed the head of the house of the wicked, laying him bare from thigh to neck.

You pierced with his own arrows the heads of his warriors who came like a whirlwind to scatter me, rejoicing as to devour the poor in secret.

[32 : 05] You trampled the sea with your horses and surging of mighty waters. Boy, that's some strength.

This part of Habakkuk's song echoes through more pages of the past, not just in God's self-revelation of himself being holy and merciful as Exodus 34 says, but this goes back to the dividing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in Exodus 14 and 15.

He even may be recalling the crossing of the Jordan in Joshua 3 or even Joshua's victory over the Amorites in Joshua 10. but he's putting this picture in our mind of waters dividing, the earth trembling, nations being defeated, all subject to the Lord.

I mean, that's great. That's really awesome to know, but we have to ask ourselves, why? Why does God do all this?

Why is God parting the waters? Why is God going forth as a divine warrior on behalf of his people? Well, I think you need to look at verse 13.

[33 : 41] The purpose is most clear here. You went out for the salvation of your people. Love.

God of love went out for the salvation of his people. Church, do you remember how this book began back in chapter 1?

This is huge because Habakkuk cried out in chapter 1, Lord, I cry to you, violence, and you will not save?

Now, listen to him. The prophet who once cried out about God's apparent failure to save is literally singing about the God who went out for the salvation of his people.

What a difference an open Bible can do. What a difference an open Bible can do. Considering that difficulty is still coming in his life, he knows the saving history of God who reigns over all difficulties and is with his people through difficulties.

[34 : 59] Habakkuk's song should lead our hearts toward an even greater demonstration of God's power. While Habakkuk recalls the exodus and the deliverance of God's people, we have the privilege of looking back upon Calvary and an empty tomb.

You see, God has revealed his saving purposes through the life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ, his son. Jesus bore the judgment for our sins on the cross, rose victorious and secured the salvation of everyone who believes in him.

According to 1 Corinthians 15, 20, his resurrection guarantees the coming defeat of death itself.

And so maybe you're sitting here sort of on the fringe line of faith.

Maybe you've been doing a couple good things in your life and you're just taking a chance at this, of earning favor with God.

I want you to take this very personal today. Because maybe you're here today and life is going pretty well, no real complaints. You have your family, you have your work, you have your plans for the future.

[36 : 18] But have you seriously considered your standing before this holy and mighty God who brings low, tall, mighty mountains?

Like the God who fills heaven is also the God before whom every sinner must give an account.

Every sinner. God's And our greatest need is the mercy that he has provided through his son, Jesus Christ alone.

How do you receive that? That gift from God? Not through works, not through methods and traditions of man, not through saints or Mary or anything like that, but through faith alone, through Christ alone.

God's receive that mercy today. And it's completely detached from your works. Your works got you in a predicament, but Christ's works got you out of it.

And that's the good news of the gospel, that your faith secures and is certain. You may know the stories you heard back in Bible school and everything.

[37 : 36] You heard about the cross, you heard about the empty tomb, but have you personally trusted in that Savior? How do you know that you have? Well, people who trust in that Savior usually live a transformed life that lives in accordance with what that Savior says to live by, obedience.

Faith without works is dead. So has the reception of his mercy transformed your life, transformed your desires, transformed your affections?

And so if you haven't trusted in Jesus, hear the mercy of God extended to you at this moment today and repent of your sin, repent, let go of your works, of your way of doing things, and trying to appease God in your own ways and believe in the Savior who did it for you, who rose again.

Jesus can save you completely. Maybe for some of us here, what a reason we have to worship. What a reason we have to worship.

We can rejoice in God's goodness when life is going well, knowing that every blessing comes from his glorious hand.

[38 : 56] However, more true to Habakkuk's situation, situation, when life becomes difficult, when the future seems bleak, we can continue to trust him.

We can. Why? Because we know Christ secured our salvation, and that's certain that we know in an uncertain future.

I mean, think about that. What power does suffering have to undo what Jesus Christ has accomplished? What power does any suffering have to undo what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us?

Or on the other hand, what power does prosperity have to improve upon our salvation that Jesus Christ has secured? What power, just as we sung today, what power does life or death have to overturn the resurrection?

Church, we have every reason to celebrate the God who saves. The Lord who faithfully kept his promises to save his people from slavery in Egypt in the exodus has now revealed the fullness of his saving mercy through Jesus Christ to save his people, not from the slavery of Egypt, but from the slavery of sin in this new exodus.

[40 : 21] Receive this today. God's saving work in Jesus Christ is the supreme interpretation of your present circumstance, whether good or bad.

God's saving work is in the What a magnificent song Habakkuk has given us. We are invited to remember the Lord whose glory filled the heavens, whose power shook the earth, and whose mighty hand delivered his people.

Will you trust him tomorrow? I want to conclude with just two encouragements today.

The first encouragement that I have is to pray with confidence in God's character. Father, bring your requests before him.

Everyone, no matter what order. Maybe it's a little fumbled up version of Acts. Maybe the S is before and, you know, things like that. Get them all, though. Those are all good marks, but, you know, get them all.

[41 : 32] You say tax? Cats. Cats. I think cats is faithful. Bring your requests, whether acts or cats.

Ask for mercy from God. Ask for mercy. Ask for healing from God. Ask for wisdom from the Lord.

Ask for deliverance from the Lord. Make Thanksgiving a regular part of your prayers, too.

Remember the holiness of God, compassion of God, generosity of God, and the faithfulness of the one who hears you. What a glorious reminder. Pray with confidence in God's character, who he is, and who he's always been.

You see, the God who deserves our praise in the good season is worthy of our trust in the difficult ones. And the second encouragement today is to continually remember God's saving work.

Man. I couldn't help but think and reflect upon that this week, to remember the scriptures. These things aren't just for a prop on your bookshelf.

[42:46] They're to be lived out, to be dived into. How precious are the scriptures? Precious. Return to them.

Often, remember his promises. Remember the cross. Remember the empty tomb. Speak these truths to one another. As a community of God, the church, we should be reminding each other of God's goodness regularly, especially when we're celebrating together, and even more especially when things are becoming difficult in life.

See, the more we remember what God has done, the more reasons we discover to praise Him for what He's promised. Habakkuk has put this song together that reverberates truth about a God who hears, a God who reigns, and a God who saves.

And that's a song worth learning, church. It's a song worth learning. I can't wait to learn the chorus with you next week. But whatever tomorrow brings, whatever tomorrow brings, let the mighty works of God remain the song of our hearts.

Certainty of God's saving work in the past is the anchor of our faith in an uncertain future. Let's pray. Let's pray.