

Habakkuk #1 - Living By Faith When You Are Frustrated

- Well, howdy, pastor Mark Driscoll here, wanting to welcome you to the Habakkuk Series, Honest to God, where a guide brings all of his questions and complaints to God, God actually takes his call kind of like a call and talk radio show and gives him a series and set of answers, it's an amazing book that really fits the mood of our times, it's an honor to teach it to you, and if you'd like to find the entire series or more of my Bible teaching, you can visit markdriscoll.org. All right, if you've got a Bible go to the book of Habakkuk, it is in your Bible, find it, it's somewhere in the middle. We're gonna spend about a month together in the book of Habakkuk, and some months ago I was driving and usually I listen to music on the commute. And on this day thought I'm gonna look over on talk radio. One of those joy filled happy places where people gather to encourage one another, and so I turned the knob and if you're under 20, it's something on the dash next to something called a CD player that we have on our dinosaurs that we drive, so I turned the knob to AM and just sort of hit the scan and found a talk radio show, that was interesting, and this guy called in first time caller, I think, and so the host says, oh, so, and so maybe it's Todd from Toledo, I don't know, Todd from Toledo, what do you wanna share with us? Here's how the guy starts the call. I'm so frustrated, that's what Todd from Toledo said. And I thought, oh, okay, there we go, it's one way to start. Amen, that's one way to start a conversation. And it got me thinking that this reminds me of the book of Habakkuk, 'cause I'm a nerd, okay. And so it reminded me of the book of Habakkuk because some books of the Bible start very easy going, very gentle, everybody on board, find your seat, right? And so some books of the Bible like letters written by a guy named Paul, they start, he's like, I love you. I'm in jail, I just think about you all the time. And I wrote a prayer for you, so just plunk your harp, and pet your bunny, and drink your cow meal tea, and read the prayer that I wrote for you, and so the book starts off sort of, oh, that's nice, not Habakkuk. Habakkuk is a guy who's super frustrated, super frustrated. He can't handle it anymore, he doesn't even have time for an introduction, he just launches in. And here's how he starts actually the first four verses these are just some of the words, violence, iniquity, wrong, destruction, strife, contention, the law is paralyzed. Justice never goes forth, the wicked surround the righteous and justice is perverted, does that sound like America? Amen, and if you've been on something called the internet, right, how's it going in the pursuit of happiness? Nobody's happy, you turn on the TV at night, listen to the talk show hosts, the comics, you listen to talk radio, you see what people are posting on social media, everybody's freaking out, everybody's frustrated, amen, yes or no?

- Yes.

- I hate to wake you up, but we're having church. Okay, so everybody's freaked out and frustrated. And his two questions that he launches with, are the same questions that everybody today ask. His first question is how long? How long is this gonna last? Moral, spiritual, financial decline, political corruption, right, we're dealing with terrorism, and cyber crimes, and human trafficking, and lying and stealing, and cheating, and killing, and you know what? Times change, but people don't, the exact same things were happening two and a half thousand years ago,

roughly when Habakkuk writes his book. So he asked the first question, how long? And then his next question is, why? Why? If you have not been frustrated, you are not paying attention, okay, if you have not asked how long and why, then you're not actually dealing with reality. And it got me thinking, what would it be like if God hosted a college? So wouldn't that be awesome? If you could call, you're like, okay, God, look, I got a couple of questions, and God's like, actually I have some answers, that's basically what happens in the book of Habakkuk, chapter one, he goes to God, hears all his frustration, God answers chapter two more. God answers, chapter three, he's like I give up, I'm gonna play guitar, sing a song, trust the Lord, calm down and just see what happens, that's the book. You can read it, you should read it, we're gonna study it for a month, you can read it in about 10 minutes. That's about how long it takes to eat a sandwich. And so you can read a whole book of the Bible in about 10 minutes, and so I'm gonna ask you to be studying, be praying, be working through this great book of the Bible, the mood, the intensity, the frustration absolutely fits our culture and people are freaking out and they don't know how to respond, and this book is not an old book. It's an eternal book, which means it's always very timely. And that being said, what I wanna do for you today, as we launch into Habakkuk, I want you to know that faith is for when you are frustrated, okay? How many of you are frustrated? Okay, how many of you are really frustrated? 'Cause those are the two categories of people, okay. Frustrated people and really frustrated people, think about something in your life that is very frustrating. Think about someone in your life, other than me, who's very frustrating, right? How many of you right now, you can think of someone or something that's frustrating. Faith is for when you are frustrated, you don't need a lot of faith on your wedding day, it's your divorce day, you don't need a lot of faith when you get your job, it's when you lose your job. You don't need a lot of faith when you're feeling healthy. It's when you're feeling sick, you don't need a lot of faith when you got a bunch of money in the bank, you need faith when there's nothing left in the bank and faith is when you're frustrated, that's the whole point of Habakkuk, so we're gonna go through it verse by verse for the better course of a month, but I wanna launch in and pull out the theme of Habakkuk as an introduction this week, 'cause I know you're gonna be reading it. I know you're gonna be studying it. I know you're gonna be digging into it, right?

- Amen.

- Don't lie, we're in church, you're doing this, okay. As you're doing that, I want you to get the theme and the thread, okay, so let me read this to you. This is sort of God's response in how to deal with frustration, because I'm 46, I got to find the exact right place where I can actually read the words, okay. This feels good, how many of you have had that experience? You're like, my phone is broken and I'm old, ah, okay. I got to find the right distance from the screen. Here we are, the Lord answered me, so he brings his frustrations to God, God answers, it'd be like, literally you're listening to a talk radio show and Todd from Toledo is like, I wish God would tell me. And he's like, actually we have God on the line, Todd from Toledo, I don't like your tone, but I'll give you an answer nonetheless. God answers him, write the vision, make it plain on tablets till we get the Bible so that he may run who reads it for still the vision awaits its appointed time, it hastens to the end, it will not lie, it seems slow, how many of you, it seems like God is slow?

Hey, fix it, fix everyone, fix everything. Why does it take so long? Things seems slow, amen, true or false? Things seems slow, it does, right? The whole world, circling the drain, your like, can you just flush it? It stinks, all right, we'll edit that, but it's true, okay. It waits it's appointed time at hastens to the end. It will not alight, it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come, it will not delay. Then he talks about how different people respond to different temptations and trials and troubles. The oldest soul is puffed up, it is not upright within him. Here's the line, underline it highlight it, right? Tattoo it on your calf, whatever, the righteous shall live by his faith, there's the thing, he comes to God. He's like, I'm very frustrated, God's like you need faith. And he says, I'm still really frustrated. And God's like, see, I told you. All right, you need faith, faith is trusting God when you're frustrated, how many of you freak out when you're frustrated? Is it just me? I married a woman who has the gift of faith, she sleeps. I'm freaking out, she prays, I'm freaking out. She's like the Lord will take care of it, and I'm like, no, He won't, I'll take care of it. Faith is for when you're frustrated, faith is for when you're frustrated, the righteous shall live by His faith. Faith is something that begins, sustains, guards your relationship with God, moreover wine is a trader, an arrogant man who has never addressed his greed as his widest shield, like death, he never has enough. He gathers from self all nations and collect as his own old people, let me deal with the first half, he talks about a vision, a vision is having some hope. It's seeing something that doesn't exist, but could if God showed up and here's the point. All of our cultures are corrupted in different ways to varying degrees because all human cultures are the product of human effort, human sinfulness, human pride, human arrogance, human folly, human rebellion. And so what happens is we're born into the world and we assume that the culture we're born into is normative. We grow up in it, we're educated by it, we participate in it, and then perhaps we bump into someone that has a different culture than we do, they do sex, money, gender, religion, finances, whatever the case might be different than us. And we think there's something wrong with them, we're right. They're wrong, they're thinking the same thing. No, we're right, you're wrong, it leads to a cultural conflict and people lose sight of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is what the vision is all about. You need to know that in addition to the cultures that we do see is a culture that we only see when we open God's word right now, Jesus is alive, He's a King. He rules over a kingdom, departed saints are with Him and the angels are in His presence, they're worshiping Him right now, as real as it is that you are sitting in your seat, Jesus is sitting on His throne, as real as we are gathered here today, there are angelic beings and departed saints who are gathered around Jesus Christ, who's alive and well. And that culture is a kingdom culture, it's a heavenly culture, and in that place where Jesus rules, there's no sin, there's no lying. There's no cheating, there's no stealing, right now in Jesus' presence, nobody's frustrated, nobody's frustrated because everything is as God intended it, and as God created it to function, now the problem is we're not in heaven. And you know what? If you have any hope for heaven, any longing for heaven, any yearning or desire or appetite for heaven, you will find yourself invariably frustrated in culture. Anybody who's ever been frustrated ultimately wants the kingdom of God, and so what we are to have is a vision, what is the kingdom like? And we are to understand that if Jesus is our King and his kingdom is our home, our frustration will continue till we're with our King in his kingdom. And in the meantime we are to be living as citizens of that kingdom, as servants of that King, bringing something of the kingdom to the culture. This is how Jesus taught us to pray, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is

in heaven. The vision is the vision of the second coming of Jesus, of the unveiling and the forthcoming of the kingdom. A culture that is not frustrating, but a culture that is filled with the presence and the goodness and the glory of God. So firstly, we need a vision for the kingdom to give us hope for the future in the midst of frustration. And what he talks about is when we're in culture, when we're living our lives, we're frustrated. And we like to say this here at the Trinity church, that we are to live our lives kingdom down not culture up. We do not believe that we should take a poll, see what people want and then tell God to bless that, that we should hear from God, and we should repent of sin, and change our behavior to come into alignment with a kingdom that will never end because the culture and all cultures, will come to an end, but the kingdom of God will endure forever. Which means that is right, all else is wrong. That is enduring, and this has a very short shelf life. And what he's saying is when culture is corrupted, when frustration comes, when things aren't working and in Habakkuk's state, things are not working politically. They're not really happy with their government, okay. Let me just throw it out as a possibility. Some may be feeling that way in our nation, amen. True or false? True, some of you are like please don't talk about politics this is where I live, I'm not gonna talk about politics, I'll talk about the kingdom, all politics are disappointing because it's not the King, Habakkuk is in a day when people are very morally frustrated because the nation is in decline, it's rebellion and parents are worried about the kids growing up in this culture. Grandparents are worried about grandkids growing up in this culture, there's no love for God. There's no regard for life, there's no obedience to his word, they're very frustrated, it's no different. In addition to the political and also the moral, there was spiritual corruption, false teachers, false doctrines, saying things were holy when their unholy, celebrating things that they should be repenting of, Habakkuk loves God, he sees it for what it is. He has a vision for the kingdom, some of you know exactly what it feels like, it's so frustrating. And then it becomes tempting to respond in one of five sinful ways to a fallen, frustrating culture. And he unpacks each of those, I'll share those with you. Next slide please, five wrong responses to a corrupt culture, he mentions five of these, the first is I'm my own King, and he uses this language, their soul is puffed up and they're arrogant, it's pride, it's the person who says, I'm not gonna do what God says, and I'm not gonna do what the culture does, I'm gonna be my own person, I'm gonna give an account to myself. I'll govern my own life, I'll set up my own kingdom, my business, my family, right, my organization, my income. I will set up my own life where it's mine, I don't need a kingdom to come, I don't need the culture to improve, I'll carve out my own little kingdom, I'll sit on my own little throne, I'll rule over my life as my own King, some of you have done that. Some of you are not going with the flow of culture, but you're not submitting to the kingdom of God. You're trying to be your own Jesus, number two, I'm my own savior, these are people who are quote, never at rest, these are people who say the future looks bleak, I'm very frustrated, I've lost my job. I've lost my spouse, you're right, I'm not doing well. My health is not great, the future is in dire condition. I have lots of anxiety, I don't think God will show up. I don't think God will take care of me, but that's okay. I'll take care of myself, some of you have set up your life in such a way that if God doesn't show up, you'll be okay, because you've learned to take care of yourself, that's what you think, that's a myth, but that's what you think, as a result you're never at rest because you know what? For God to take care of you, he's on the job day and night, if you wanna take care of yourself, you need to be on the job day and night. There's always something to do, there's always something to worry about,

there's always something left undone. There's always potential danger that needs to be avoided. That's why some of you are stressed and depressed and exhausted, you've set up your life saying, I don't think God is gonna take care of me. Therefore, I will give myself His job description and I will take care of myself, how do I know that? I've done that, right, I was a pastor who blew out his adrenal glands twice and had two intestinal ulcers. And my eye was always twitching because of nerves and people thought I was flirting with them. I was just stressed, meanwhile, my wife is snoring because she has faith, faith snores, you need to know that. Okay, faith snores, okay, number three. I'm choosing culture over kingdom. We used to call these liberals and now they call themselves progressives, they think they're further along on the evolutionary chart than the rest of us. And yeah, that's a slam, there we go. So I'm choosing culture over kingdom, and what that is, that is Jesus is a King, the kingdom is a home, but when I bring the King and the kingdom to the culture, I find fierce resistance, how many of you right now, if you just quoted certain Bible verses you would need to do it with a helmet on an, a cap, okay. Just, it's not, it's not like, oh, I have a word from the Lord, let me tell you about fornication, oh good. I wanted to learn new words. No, it doesn't go well, right? The airbag deploys kapush, and so what happens is, you know that you'll be rejected relationally, you'll hurt financially, socially, your social capital will take a great hit, and so what you decide is, I surrender, right, Jesus says, go into their culture and bring my kingdom and your like I brought a white flag. I surrender on certain issues, certain beliefs, certain things that are controversial, you know what I'm talking about and what he says is that's not upright. That's crooked, that's like a soldier being deployed to battle showing up on the battlefield and saying, I'll join your team, if you don't shoot me, it's treason. It's not progress, it's cowardice, number four, I'm avoiding reality, how many of you have gotten there? Somebody resized like, have you seen what's on the news? They're like, not in years, oh, no wonder you're joyful. You know, you just ignore it all, you're just like I don't have the internet, I don't watch the news, I don't talk to people, I'm not on any social media blog. I don't know what a blog is, I know what a log is. That's how long it's been since I used technology, right? That's how some people are, how many of you though, if you're honest, you reach a saturation point. You're just like, I can't take anymore. Let me ask you this, does more information about what's going on in the world bring you more peace? Okay, we agreed on that, did you notice that? We came to a quick consensus, no, the more you know, the more freaked out you are, terrorism, right? All kinds of crimes, violence, injustice, political corruption, you go, ah, I can't stomach anymore. I can't handle anymore, how does God do it? How does God see everything that's happening and not throw up all the time? And so what happens is certain people, they just sort of hit a saturation point where they avoid reality, says wine is a trader, this is just like, what's going on? I don't know, I don't know, I just got a couple of friends. Jack Daniels, Jim beam, Jose Cuervo, that's my support group, I just spend time with them. I don't know what's going on in the world. We'll edit that out, but that's funny, but nonetheless, what happens is you just kind of avoid reality. I mean, don't raise your hand, but you're right, 'cause you won't anyways, you avoid reality. But anyways, that's where you're at, that's where you're at. Okay, and then last category, he talks about, I'm gonna benefit myself people, he talks about them. Greed, never have enough, gather for themselves. They look out and they say, you know what? This culture is corrupt, people are foolish. There's a lot of chaos, this is a business opportunity. There is money to be made, I'll tell you about my friend, the drug dealer, not my

personal drug dealer. Just a guy I know, okay, and in some states they have legal drug dealers, do you know that? Okay, they do, so I'm talking to this friend of mine, he's a legal drug dealer and he has a lot of weed, like a Costco full of weed, and I asked him, I said, "So how's the weed business?" 'Cause he asked me, "How's the church business?" I was like, let's just make this awkward for both of us. So I'll tell you how the church business is, you tell me how the weed business is. And he said, how's the church business? "Oh, it's pretty good, how's the weed business?" "It's really good." I said, "Do you have good weed or..." I don't know anything about weed, I still haven't smoked any weed, I'm the only American, but I haven't, and tell me about weed and I'll tell you about Jesus and we'll just call it even, and that's what we did, so he said, "Well, we have really good weed." I said, well, "How much weed do you smoke?" He's like, "I don't smoke weed." I was like, "But you sell weed, you're the weed guy." I said, "How come you don't smoke the weed?" He said, "Oh, it's bad for you, really, it's bad for you." Yeah if you smoke weed, you'll just get lazy and just lay on the couch, he said, "I couldn't run a business if I was smoking the product." I was like, "What if your kids came to you and said they wanted to smoke weed?" He's like, "I'd tell them no." I was like, "Why?" He says, "It's bad for them." I said, "You know that they're gonna inherit a lot of weed, right, I mean you know this, right?" I'm like, and I'd be quick to journey all my joints, This is a business, you're gonna hand your kid a Costco of weed and be like, don't smoke it, just sell it. It's profitable, but if you smoke it, you won't be able to keep the books, that's the conclusion that he came to. And what he's decided is yeah, the world is a mess. There's a way to make a buck, I mean, I'm like, I like this guy, we've talked about Jesus a lot and I'm like, dude, you better straighten this out. Otherwise you'll be the thing that's set on fire at the end, right, this is gonna end badly for you. But in every culture, there are people who's saying there's an opportunity in this frustrating, hurl and corrupted culture to take advantage of foolish people who think that they're free. But in fact, they're fools, true or false? Okay, this book Habakkuk is roughly-ish two and a half thousand years old, but because it's an eternal book and not an old book, it's still very timely, amen. Our world is just as messed up, people are just as frustrated and they're responding quite similarly, pastor Mark, is there another path forward? Yes, there is, thank you for asking, here's the next verse. It's about patient faith in a corrupt culture. The key line, the phrase, the bell that gets rang. The fire alarm that gets pulled, right? The life ring that gets thrown, it's Habakkuk 2:4. "The righteous shall live by His faith." "The righteous shall live by His faith." This is ultimately trusting what you read in the word until you see it in the world, faith is trusting what you read in the word until you see it in the world. That's what faith is, faith is saying, God promises. I don't see it, but I trust that it is coming. And faith is the bridge between where you are and where you will be, faith is the bridge over that chasm of difference, this little line, from Habakkuk 2:4. "The righteous shall live by his faith." Because it is the living word of God, has absolutely exploded, and it's one of the most significant lines in the history of the world. How many of you didn't know that? How many of you didn't even know Habakkuk was in the Bible? Right, it's a little book a long time ago, but because it's God's word, it always comes with God's power, this line gets quoted three times in the New Testament, so Habakkuk is a book in the Old Testament before Jesus comes, then Jesus comes and then the New Testament is written after He dies and rises, one of the places is Hebrews 10, verse 37 through chapter 11, verse two. Some of you are more mature believers. Some of you have done some Bible study. And as soon as I say faith, faith, faith. If I were to ask

you, what one chapter of the Bible would you go to for faith? Where would you go? Hebrews 11, it's the faith chapter just preceding it, is a quote from Habakkuk because the great faith chapter in the new Testament is in large part, a commentary on Habakkuk 2:4, I'll prove it to you. Hebrews 10:37 through 11 to four, "Yet a little while and the coming one will come and will not delay." Faith is one of three things, it's trusting something that happened and there were no witnesses for it. So he'll tell us here in Hebrews 11, just a few verses down. "By faith we know how the heavens and the earth were created." No one was at creation except for God, amen. So you could say big God, you could say big bang. Either way, they weren't there, you weren't there. I wasn't there, the only person there was God. So unless God tells us how creation came into existence, we don't know, no one was there to record except for God. So some things we take by faith, 'cause no one was there. God tells us what happened, so we trust him. Other things we take by faith, meaning they happen, but we weren't there, we have to take the testimony of someone else, so the Bible says that Jesus preached and people heard him and that He healed the sick and people verified that including a medical doctor named Luke, the Bible says that, "He said He was God." Others heard that, and it was legally entered into the public record, it says that Jesus died and that he rose from death, and it says that witnesses up to 500 at a time over the course of 40 days, in first Corinthians 15 saw him, you and I weren't there. This is one and done historical event. It can't be recreated in a test tube. It can't be seen through a microscope or a telescope. It's a historical event, we have to trust the testimony of those who were witnesses, that's faith. That's how we get the Bible, the third category are things that haven't even happened yet. He gives one of them here, what he's saying is, Jesus is coming back, that's what he's saying. So we say, prove it, I will, just wait, right? Just wait, I can't prove it now because it hasn't happened. Faith is oftentimes in the promises of God that we're awaiting fulfillment for. Okay, that's what it is, it's trusting, there is a King. There is a kingdom, the King is coming and is bringing the kingdom, it's believing that, it's trusting that, it's banking on that, it's no plan B. It's just all plan A, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him, what he's saying is, when life is the most frustrating, that's when you need the most faith, but we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls, so what is faith? Here's the new Testament, Bible definition of faith. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for." Jesus, the Bible says you're coming back, I hope you are. Jesus, the Bible says that you're gonna bring a kingdom. I hope it's coming, Jesus, the Bible says in your kingdom, I won't be sick anymore, you're gonna heal me. My blind friend will see, my deaf friend will hear, my lame friend will run, that all the poor people are gonna be well fed, and all the sad people will have the tears wiped from their eyes, and we won't need wars anymore, and we won't need police officers anymore. And we won't need first responders in medics anymore. We sure do now, but they all can take forever off. When it's all said and done, because sin and suffering and Satan will be gone, if you even believe that's possible, you're gonna get frustrated, and faith is keeping that hope of God's promises alive, we have faith, preserve their souls, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, the conviction of things not seen, for by it the people of old received their commendation, what he says is God's people have always lived by faith, so you think about it in the Old Testament, God's people in the Old Testament, a promise is made, Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming, all these promises in the Old Testament, He'll be born in Bethlehem, He's mom will be a Virgin.

He'll be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. He'll be crucified between two thieves. He'll be put in a rich man's tomb, three days later, Shazam Bazinga Cowabunga, He's gonna come forth very much alive, and everybody's gonna be saved, that's it? Man, I hate to wake you up, okay. So they have these promises and by faith, they were waiting. Where's Jesus? Hundreds, thousands of years, Jesus shows up, everything promised happened, they live by faith. In the coming of Jesus, we live by faith in the second coming of Jesus, the Bible also says, he's coming again. He'll judge the living in the dead, He'll set up a kingdom that never ends, the dead will rise from their graves. That the earth will be as God intended it, that sending the curse will be no more. We'll be in the presence of God, as the people of God, enjoying God together forever, it's not yet, it's not yet. So we're living by faith, we're waiting, we're anticipating. But let me tell you this we're in this privileged position historically, because we can look back and say, well, everything that the Bible said would happen around the first coming, happened, that helps give us confidence in the Bible coming to pass for the second coming, okay. So we have hope in that, this is where faith is in the word of God, faith is in the word of God. That's why there is a constant unrelenting, unyielding, ungodly attack on this book, because if we can't trust what God said, then we have no faith, or hope, or conviction for our future or eternity, faith is connected to the word of God, it's trusting the promises of God. That's why when you stop reading your Bible, your faith starts to grow weak and die. That's why, when you don't sit under Bible teaching, you don't do Bible reading, you don't do Bible memorizing. You don't do Bible discussing, you don't do Bible studying. What happens is your faith gets starved and it grows weak because you lose a vision for God and His kingdom. And you become overwhelmed, frustrated, exhausted by all of the fallen culture that surrounds you and overtakes you, so I love you so much. And I'm so excited, I'm gonna ask you, read your Bible. Start with Habakkuk, dig into it, spend some time, it's a short little book, it's a great place to build momentum because faith is ultimately rooted in trusting God's word before you see it in the world. And that being said, when it comes to this issue of faith, one way to understand faith is to juxtapose it with sight. And that's what he says, it's the conviction of things not seen, so sight is something we see, faith is something that we trust God sees, understand the difference? God sees the future, I don't, faith trusts that God sees what I don't see, so people will say this. How many of you heard this line? I'll believe it when I see it, that sight, faith says I'll believe it until I see it. That's the difference, faith says, I'll believe it when I see it, excuse me, sight says I'll believe it when I see it, faith says I'll believe it until I see it. I'll believe it until I see it, and that's the difference between faith and sight, God knows tomorrow, you don't, God knows forever, you don't, God knows every hair on your head, every day of your life, every longing of your heart, God knows. And faith is not, let me say this, this is important. Faith is not a way that you manipulate God, to get the result that you want, faith is where you trust God to use the circumstances, to make you more like Jesus. Our goal is often God give me what I want. And God's goal is often very different, become like my son. Faith is not a way to make everything okay, but faith is a way for you to be okay, even if everything is not okay, we're oftentimes very worried about the results, God is very worried about our character. Right, and so he quotes it here and then he quotes it as well, the New Testament authors do, in two other places, this line Habakkuk 2:4. Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11, will call it justification by faith, it's a big theological doctrine. It's very important, I'll try to explain it quite simply. So Romans is one of the most significant books written in the history of

the world, so much of Christian theology is based on the overt instruction to this book. It's hard to overstate its importance very early on, a man named Paul, who by the way was a very religious guy. He was circumcised on the right day, he spoke the right language, he memorized books of the Bible, he persecuted people who disagreed with him, he was very devout. He took the Sabbath off, he tithed out of his spice rack. He was that guy, okay, he was that guy. And then he realized that he had faith in himself. And that, that faith wouldn't save him, the only faith that saves is faith in Jesus, the man who writes this, was one of the most devoutly religious, committed, hardworking men in all of human history, and he was wrong. You can be sincere, and sincerely wrong, Paul trusted in Paul until he trusted in Jesus. That's the difference between what we'll call works and faith, works is trusting me, faith is trusting Jesus. There is a problem between us and God, and something needs to be done, the question is who will do what needs to be done to resolve this separation, this relational problem with God? If you think that we can fix the problem, you believe in works, if you believe that Jesus fixes the problem we trust in him by faith. And the truth is works need to be done. Something needs to happen to reconcile our relationship with God, but it's not our works, it's Jesus' works. That take care of the problem that God has with us. Now, when it comes to this, the Bible talks about this here in Romans 1:17, four in it that's the good news of the person and the work of Jesus, the righteousness of God, what we're talking about here is, God is Holy, God is good, God is just, God is truthful, God is right. We're unholy, we're unjust, we're sinful, we're rebellious. We're wrong, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, who does he quote? Oh, gosh, oh gosh, really? I'm having my okay, I'll ask again, okay, who's he quoting?

- Habakkuk.

- Habakkuk. Yeah all right, three excited people, it's a start. All right, the righteous shall live by faith. So here's the question, how can a Holy God, who is perfect and rules a perfect kingdom allow imperfect, rebellious, sinful people, declaring us to be righteous and acceptable in his sight? That's the issue, how can God still be good and let bad people into His presence? This is the issue that ultimately led to something called the Protestant reformation, what we're talking about here is who's accepted, who's rejected, who's welcomed, who is cast away, who's bad or good, who's acceptable, unacceptable in the sight of God? That's the question, and he deals with this as well in Galatians 3:11, now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law. What he's saying is this, religious people will pick up the book and they'll say, okay, I'm just gonna do everything it says to do and not do anything it doesn't say to do. And then I could stand before God and tell him what a great life I've lived, have any of you tried that? It does not work, I still remember as a young pastor, I was preaching the Bible, a guy got saved, became a Christian, came up to me, we gave him a Bible. He says, what do I do? I said, start reading your Bible, he comes up to me, not long after I was like, how's it going? He's like, I'm reading my Bible, I was like, awesome. How's it going? He's like, it doesn't work, it does not work. This does not work, I said, what do you mean it doesn't work? He said, the more I read the worse I feel. I said, bro, it's working, it's for sure working. 'Cause it shows you who you're supposed to be. And you look at you and you go, I'm not like that. Okay, you realized you're a sinner. That's the point of God's law, is to show us our shortcomings, our failures, our faults that are flaws. No one is

justified by God before God, rather by the law for who does he call?

- Habakkuk.

- Habakkuk. Okay, you're doing better, the righteous shall live by faith, so believe this, the Bible says that a day is coming where you will die, and you will stand before God. And you will give an account for your life. Think of courtroom imagery, when we hear this language of justified, it's courtroom language and imagery. So you will die, you're gonna stand before God, and Satan is gonna be there, to prosecute you. He is the accuser of the children of God, Revelation 12:10. And what Satan is going to do, he is going to just start reading parts of the Bible and then testifying about your life, okay, it says here you were supposed to love your enemies, we have a list of enemies that were not loved, guilty. Also says here you were supposed to tithe, we've brought in your financials, oh really? Satan's an accountant, just so you know. And we ran the numbers, you did not give generously. In fact, you gave more to Slurpee's than your savior. It's not good, it's not good. Oh man, also Jesus said, don't have lustful thoughts and we have some tape, we wanna roll of your life. Mom, close your eyes, so the Bible says you're not supposed to lie, wait, it's gonna be a while. But we're now gonna read all the lies you've told. And don't tell us you didn't tell, 'cause we'll just add it to the end of the list, he's right? Oh man, Bible says that you're a forgiven person. So you need to be a forgiving person. Here's a list of all the people that you've hoarded, resentment, bitterness, or anger toward in your heart. Ah! Oh, you were a husband, it's said to love your wife. We've got transcripts of the days that you didn't do that. Oh, oh, and she's here to testify, oh, no baby, come on. Oh wife, it says you're supposed to respect your husband. He's here to testify as well, this could go for a long time. Amen, long time, yeah, another guy's like, that's why we got eternity, brother. It's gonna be a awhile, good day or bad day for you? Bad day, okay, here's what's gonna happen on that day. There's three kinds of works responses, people are trusting in themselves, first they're gonna be the good enough people, these are the people like, I'm good enough. And what the good enough people do, they find the worst person they can find, and they compare themselves to them. So it's always Hitler, always Hitler, always Hitler. I'm not Hitler, oh wow, that's yeah. That's a real high bar to pull vault over. That's a great job there, Jimmy, and so what we do, we find the worst person we're like, see, they're bad. I'm not too bad, I'm sure God grades on a curve. Oh, C student, yay, and you think you're in. What the good enough person doesn't understand is we're not supposed to compare ourselves to the worst person, we're supposed to compare ourselves to Jesus, He's what a normal person looks like. Secondly, God, doesn't grade on a curve. God sees only two categories, perfect and imperfect. This where Jesus taught us, be perfect. As your heavenly father is perfect, and we all agree that nobody's what? Perfect, one guy is we killed him, that's how bad we are. Okay, we're like, well there's one perfect guy. We whacked him, that means you're bad, okay. So the good enough people aren't gonna make it. What's gonna happen then is, the cause crusaders, they're gonna bring out their resume, they're gonna say, I marched, I gave, I had a cause, I devoted myself to a thing, I saved the whales, or I recycled, or you know, I voted for candidates, or cleaned up the environment and they're gonna give you their cause. The cause crusaders know there's something wrong and they're trying to be the good guys, and if you don't agree with their cause they're gonna shame you and condemn you and hate you,

and they're gonna publicly malign you to show how morally superior they are to you as they are beating you, okay. Oh, that's insightful, that's America, okay. That's how this works, and the cause crusaders will say, there's good people and bad people and all of us good people supported our causes, those bad people didn't support our cause God take us into your kingdom, the good guys are here, you're welcome, God will say no. How ridiculous is it? Like God, we've violated your laws, we've rebelled against you, we murdered your son, but we recycle. Like really? That's not even, it's not even, amen. I mean, it's a weird world, it's like save the dolphins, kill the babies, ah, wait really? Okay, I just threw it out there, but just something to think about, how confused this world is, then all of a sudden we're the good guys who murder people, what the... No, the cause crusaders again, have faith in themselves. And then the last group is gonna be the really religious, the really religious, and you think about it on the earth today, how hard are various people in their religions, working, trying to pay God back and make it right? There's whole Eastern religions that believe in karma. That means I must've done something bad in my last life. So I need to suffer in this life to try to make up for it. And so people are hurting themselves, they are suffering, they don't understand, Jesus already suffered. They're killing themselves, they don't understand that Jesus has already died, they're punishing themselves they don't understand that Jesus was already punished, and different religions have different things that they will say make you acceptable in the sight of God. Boy, I got down three times a day and I prayed East. I put on sacred underwear and got married in a temple. I spoke in tongues, yaba, daba, doo, I got baptized. I gave 10%, right, whatever the case may be. And really religious people are trying to do something to make God happy, all of which makes God very unhappy. All of that is works, all of that is works. It is evident that no one is justified before God, by the loss, similar translations will say, by works of the law, it's works. So here's what I want you to do, number one, I want you to believe that by faith that you're gonna die. Stand before God and give an account, how should you plead? Guilty, just save everybody's time, right? How do you plead? Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, and just be quiet and let Jesus get the last word, because Jesus will stand up and say, ah, they're with me, huh, good. I was trusting that this was the case. Now I see it, yah, feel so much better, okay. They're with me, they didn't live a perfect life, but I did. So I'm gonna give them my righteousness. They deserve death, I died, so I paid their penalty. They were separated, but I made them reconciled. They were held bound, but I decided now they're having sun. Oh good, and what will be true is how sinful we are, will be abundantly clear and how wonderful Jesus is, will be eternally clear, amen, so that's why if you're here and you're like, why do you guys get excited about Jesus? Because we're justified by faith alone, through grace alone, in Christ alone, it's not me saving myself. It's Jesus saving me, it's not me doing the right thing. It's Jesus living a perfect life, dying a substitutionary death, paying an eternal debt, adopting me into a family, preparing a kingdom place for me, embracing me as someone who is loved and accepted, and should be hated and rejected, and I'm no better than anyone, in fact, I'm worse than most people, but it's the love of God, it's the grace of God. It's the work of Jesus, and I'm just trusting him, amen. That's it. And that's the big storyline of the Bible. And so when Habakkuk says, the righteous will live by faith, your relationship with God starts by faith. Your relationship with God is sustained by faith. And some of you are here and you're moral people, you're religious people, you're devout people, you're people who are reading the Bible, and

you're trying, trying, trying, trying, trying, there's a guy like you. His name is Martin Luther, in the history of the world, he's one of the most significant men, he was a monk. He was trained legally as a lawyer, so he had a lawyer's mind and he went to God's word and he took it as God's law, and then he started examining, prosecuting his own life and he realized God's got a lot of problems with me, thought, word, deed, omission, commission, all my faults, flaws, failures, all my sins, all the suffering I have caused others. He actually started to punish himself, trying to pay God back, slept in an uncomfortable bed, ate bad food, ruined his digestive track, made himself miserable, he was a bit of a basket case. Didn't sleep much, he was willing to forgo marriage and children just to suffer, it causes life to be hard. God, please let me pay you back, he was a miserable man. And he was going a bit mental, and then one day he opened the Bible, and what do you think he read? Please say Habakkuk, he read Habakkuk, okay. He read Habakkuk chapter two, verse four. How many of you have read the Bible, and read the Bible, and read the Bible, and then one day the Holy spirit opens your understanding and you understand the Bible. You're like, ah, that helps, please read your Bible. And if you've read a portion of the Bible, feel free to read it again, Habakkuk was a section of the Bible that he had read, but the Holy spirit met with him, the Holy spirit wants to meet with you. When you open the Bible, he reads Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous will live by faith." Here's how he explained it, before those words broke upon my mind, I hated God. Some of you believe in God, you just don't like Him. And I was angry with Him, some of you are angry with God. Faith doesn't get frustrated with God, but faith brings frustration to God, I hated God, I was angry with God. He said, because not content with frightening us sinners by the law and by the miseries of life, He still further increased our torture by the gospel. The good news of Jesus, but when, by the spirit of God, I understood those words, the just or the righteous, shall live by faith, the just or the righteous shall live by faith, then I felt born again, like a new man. I entered through the open doors, into the very paradise of God, you say what caused the Protestant Reformation of which we were a part? What caused the transformation of Martin Luther? What delivers people from working for God to trusting in the finished work of Jesus their God? Faith, Habakkuk 2:4 was the proverbial salvation verse of Martin Luther, my dear friend, if you're here and you're not a Christian, do not trust yourself. Do not trust your morality, do not trust your spirituality. Do not trust your good works or your well-intended efforts. Don't trust your culture, don't trust your government. Not with your soul, you need to trust Jesus, that He did live, He is God, He lived without sin. He did die in your place for your sins, that three days later, He did rise, that He has ascended into heaven, that He's alive and well right now, amen. He's alive and well right now, and that He is a King with a kingdom, and that one day you will die, and you'll give an account before Him. And He will render a verdict regarding your life in eternity, and you need to trust Him. I'm begging you, trust Him, till you see Him. And then you'll thank Him, for those of you who are Christians and you're here, what are you frustrated about? Some of you have been told, if I was really a good Christian, I wouldn't get frustrated, Habakkuk is a mature believer who actually wrote a book of the Bible about how frustrated he was, so what do you do with your frustration believer? You need to meet with God, today starting in just a moment in worship and communion time this week, you need to meet with God, as Habakkuk did, you need to be honest with God, as Habakkuk was, you need to articulate your frustrations to God, as Habakkuk models, and I would encourage you to be studying that book to help you learn how to

do so. Just close with a couple observations, faith doesn't mean that everything will be okay, but that you'll be okay. Faith is trusting what God says while waiting to see what God does, faith keeps trusting God's promises. That light is coming while pressing forward in utter darkness, for some of you, there's some parts of your life right now, it's utter darkness. Faith trusts that light is coming, so you keep going. Faith loads up your truckload of burdens and drives them to the Lord to drop them off. So you do not have to carry them anymore. That's what Habakkuk does, God, here's all the burdens I'm carrying, I'm handing them to you, you could carry them. They're going to crush me, faith does not get frustrated with God, but does bring frustration to God. Faith is always trusting a God that you do not always understand, some of you are in circumstances and you're like, God, just tell me what you're doing. I need to understand, God's like you have a three pound fallen brain, my ways and thoughts, it says in Isaiah are a lot higher than yours, if I did tell you, I'm not sure you would even like it, or you would understand it, you may live in fear of it, so rather than understanding how about trusting? More than understanding God, it's important to be trusting God, and faith is trusting even when there's not understanding, God, I don't know what you're doing, but I trust that you are good, and I choose to run to you as my safe place, faith is letting God be your lightning rod to ground out the storms in your life, before you start blowing people up and setting things on fire. How many of you, you get frustrated, you explode. He takes his frustration to God, he lets God be the lightning rod that grounds out his frustration. Faith it has a lot more to do with trusting God than understanding God, faith values the relationship with God over resolution to life's problems. Oftentimes we come to God, we're saying, God, give me resolution, and God says, welcome. I'm looking for relationship, lastly, faith is trusting what you read in the word, and so you see it in the world. My dear friend, Jesus is alive, Jesus is coming back, and there will be a kingdom that never ends. Between now and then there will be frustration and it needs to be met with faith, Father God, I thank you for an opportunity to open Habakkuk and other scriptures today, Lord Jesus. We acknowledge that right now, you are a King ruling over a kingdom, we don't see it, but by faith, we believe it. We weren't there Lord Jesus, when you lived your sinless life, but by faith, we believe it. We were not there when you died your substitutionary death, but by faith, we believe it, we were not there Lord Jesus, when you walked away from your tomb, conquering sin and death, but by faith, we believe it, Lord Jesus, we have not yet seen you return and unveil your eternal kingdom, but by faith we believe it, and in those circumstances, in days, and sufferings, and pains, and questions, and longings, and yearnings, and hurts, and tears, and fears where we're frustrated. Holy spirit, please give us an increased measure of faith. Please bring to these dear people, faith for the life that they have, the circumstances they've faced, the adversity that is against them, the future that they are fearful of, the regrets that they carry from their past, Lord Jesus, we may have many problems, but we are so grateful that you have dealt with our most important problem, our sin problem, our separation problem, our salvation problem, Lord Jesus, thank you for taking care of our biggest problem and entering into a relationship with us to help us get through our other problems. Holy spirit, I pray that the kingdom of God would be present among the people here today, that right now, those who don't know you would come to trust you, that those who do know you would meet with you, that they would sense your presence, that they would welcome your relationship, that they would experience something that Habakkuk did, at the end of his great book, he came to a place, not of full understanding, but of

full surrender, not to a place of having all of his questions answered, but worshiping in song, so Lord Jesus, as we come, we come in the spirit of Habakkuk, as we partake of communion, we remember your finished work and it is finished and there is nothing left for us to do, to earn salvation, we acknowledge that you are our King and that we live for your kingdom and we wanna live Holy and obedient lives increasingly preparing ourselves for that eternal homecoming and Lord God, as we come to worship, we come to do the thing that is in heaven and that is the worship of the Lord Jesus. And so Lord Jesus, thy kingdom come, thy will be done as we worship you on earth, as you were being worshiped in heaven, and we ask for this grace in your good name. Amen.