

# Kenny Moorner - The Message of Habakkuk

I want to share a message with you this morning about what is said in the book of Habakkuk. There's about 10 men in this audience this morning who are going: "we just heard about this." Because in our class at Doug West's house Tuesday, we talked about the book of Habakkuk. And I'm going to, I was going to, mention all these guys, but I'm afraid I would forget one. But I'm going to tell you that this lesson this morning is a result of that class. So, there's a sense in which all of these men helped put this sermon together. So, if you like it, thank me, if you don't like it, get on to them. That's what that's what I want to tell you this morning. And I'm going to make a little apology to them, because they're going to hear some things that we talked about on Tuesday. But the reason that I'm preaching this lesson is for this reason: what we talked about, I think, is something that every single one of us needs to hear. And it's something that I really couldn't get off my mind. And I'm going to explain that as I go through the lesson this morning. We're going to look at some things. It's not just a lot of things, it's really one thing. It's really the message. It's really just a message. A primary message that we're going to look at from the book of Habakkuk.

A little background, if I may. Habakkuk was a prophet of God that we know very little about. The context of the entire book probably tells us, we can deduce that he was probably from Jerusalem, that's a pretty good guess, if you're talking about a prophet of God. But he felt a great earnest feeling about what happened in Judah and about the nation of Judah. As a matter of fact, his name means ardent embrace, he loves his nation. And he's going to say some things in these three chapters, as we think about this, that are going to be directly related to what was going on, what was about to happen in this country. He prophesied in about 606. From what we can tell, in 605, about a year or two later, Babylon came in and conquered Judah. So, what Habakkuk says, really to his people, or it's really to let them know that I'm going to tell you what you need to hear. And I'm just going to tell you right up front today, folks, here's the reason I'm preaching his lesson, what he told them they needed here is exactly what I think we need to hear. That's why I'm preaching this lesson. That's not an uncommon statement, when you're talking about the prophets to say, this is what the prophets taught. They needed to hear it, but we need to hear it today. And I understand that, but I'm specifically talking to you about these things today because I think we can take it home with us, not just today, but for the rest of our lives.

When you get to chapter one, and I do want you, I want you to turn I don't have all of these verses. As a matter of fact, I don't have most of these verses on these overheads today. And that's intentional. I want you to take your Bible, and I want you to turn to these verses and we're going to read them I think we're going to make, hopefully, make an impression on you as you think about what Habakkuk is saying to the nation of Judah. In verse, one of Habakkuk the first chapter the burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw, "Oh Lord, how long shall I cry and you will not hear? Even cry out to you, "Violence!" and you will not save? Why do you show me iniquity and cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence or before me; there is strife and contention, it arises. Therefore, the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous, therefore perverse judgment proceeds." Habakkuk says to God, why are you not hearing me? Why are you not listening to me? Why aren't you helping our nation in the midst of all its trouble? As a matter of fact, he says the law was

powerless. What was designed to help us doesn't help us anymore. I'm going to tell you what, folks, that sounds a lot like where we live. Violence and the power of the law has been taken out. And the difficulties that arise. It sounds a whole like where I live, and my guess is it sounds a whole lot like about where you live. And he asked God, how long will I cry out to you, and you will not hear. In essence he's saying, you're not doing anything about it God. When you get to verse five, the text tells us that the Lord replies and here's what he says verse five, "look among the nations and watch." I'm not going to read all of this but he's talking about a particular group that's going to come in, and that's going to take over Judah. And they're going to take Judah in captivity, you know who those people are, then the Babylonians, listen to what he says, "Look among the nations and watch. Be utterly astonished. For I will work a work and your days, which you would not believe, though I've told you. For indeed, I'm raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation, which marches through the breath of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves." And he goes on to talk about the rest of the things are and the imagery that says, this is who the Babylonians are. It's terrible and goes down, he talks about that through verse 11. So, as Habakkuk is thinking about that, he raises, really, what is another question when you get to verse 12. He says, in verse 12, "are you not from everlasting Oh Lord, my God, and my holy one? We shall not die. Oh Lord, you have appointed them for judgment; Oh Rock have marked them for correction." In other words, he says, wait a minute, Lord, I hear what you're saying. But you're the holy one. You're the everlasting one. We're your people. You're not going to let anything happen to us. You ever think that maybe, just maybe, God's not going to let anything happen to this nation? Because there is some semblance of dignity, spirituality. We're the United States of America! Man, we were founded on these principles. And can you imagine Habakkuk saying, well, wait a minute, we were founded on these principles. And the Lord saying it doesn't matter. I don't care how you were founded. I don't care who you are. I don't care who you think you are. I've got news for you. And the fact that you think you won't die is wrong. The fact of the fact is that you will die. And he's going to talk to them about that. So, when you get to chapter two, here's what he says. To that question that Habakkuk asked, he says, "Then the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, make it plain on tablets." This is a passage that Henry just read for us. "Write the vision, make it plain on tablets that he may run, who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end of it, it will speak and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by faith." Here's the message. The message is that the just will live by faith. It's not just a message, it's the message. And everything in Habakkuk surrounds itself with that very idea. So, once he makes that statement, then he goes on, beginning in verse five through verse 19, and basically what he says all the wicked are going to perish. It doesn't matter who you are, no matter whether you're in Judah, whether you're in Babylon, whether you're in a nation that is going to conquer Babylon, all people are going to perish, everybody's going to die. And when you get to verse 20, this is a passage that we're familiar with and listen to what he says in verse 20 of chapter two, "but the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." You ever thought about what that means? We sing about it. It's not just be quiet. It's not just a physical Be quiet. It's imagery that says the Lord is reigning over everything. You don't speak. You understand. And in essence, what Habakkuk says is you don't speak you just live by faith. That's what he wants us to do. When we might complain about certain things, and I'm not suggesting that we ought not be concerned about certain things. I'm concerned about it. I'm concerned about our world. I have a 91-year-old father, who I love with all my heart. And he spends much of his day sitting around watching the news and being

concerned about what's going to happen. What's going to happen with this country? Well, fortunately for him, he probably doesn't have a long time to think about that and to have to deal with that. But he's still concerned about that. And I understand that, and he and I talked about those kinds of things. But the bottom line is what the Lord says is have faith. Have faith.

And so, when you get to Chapter Three there's a prayer of Jehovah or rather there's a prayer of Habakkuk. Verse two says, "Oh lord I've heard your speech and was afraid. Oh, Lord, revive your work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make it known. In wrath remember mercy." What Habakkuk says is just have mercy on all of us. I get it. I get it. Have mercy on all of us. When you get to verse 16, I want you to listen, this is, you're going to think to yourself, I heard this last week. Okay, listen to this. Listen to what happened to Habakkuk, "When I heard my body trembled, my lips quivered at the voice. Rottenness entered my bones, and I trembled in myself." What's that sound like? Who does that sound like? Belshazzar. Daniel five last week, remember? Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall and everything about him shook. He got emotionally unstable. He got physically unstable. Scared him to death. That's what Habakkuk says. "When I heard my body trembled. My lips quivered at the voice. Rottenness entered my bones, and I trembled in myself that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people he will invade them with his troops."

Well, I want you to think about the end of the book. Now. I'm not done yet. So, don't get all excited. I want you to look at the last few verses. This is key. I'm reading in chapter three specifically. Verse 17, "Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive main fail and the fields yield no food; Though the flock be cut off from the fold, and there'll be no herd in the stalls." What the Lord says is and what Habakkuk says is everything that affected a Jewish family sustenance: the food, the olive, the animal, it's all gone. None of that's here. We don't we don't have that. In Mitch's prayer this morning, He said, and I agree with him 100%. I think at least a couple of times because I made note of that. At least a couple of times. He said we were so blessed. There were words like that. That's an understatement. I don't know how you could say it any better, though. But to say we're blessed is almost - it's just such an understatement. Compared to so many in the world we are truly blessed. And the reality is that it can turn in a second. It's just the reality. None of us, none of us have ever had to deal with that. I don't know if we will. But the reality is we could. And that's what Habakkuk said is going to happen here. It is happening here. There's this whole nation, basically, he says he's out of control. The first chapter is not about battle. It's about Judah. Here's the first chapter where he talks about violence and there's no power and that's about his own nation. And what he's complaining about is why are you letting this happen? And now you're telling me that a more wicked nation is going to come in and deal with our problems. And the Lord said, That's exactly right. That's what's going to happen. And basically, he's saying that there's nothing you can do about it. Except learn from it. So, you get to verse 18. This is the key folks. Listen. Listen carefully. "Yes, I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my salvation. the Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And he will make me walk on my high hills." We read that in the class Tuesday. And as we read that, that just stuck with me. Talking about that whole book and about all the things that Habakkuk saw and all the questions that had and all the answers that God gave him. We get to the end of the book, and here's what the text says, "My salvation is in the Lord." Not anywhere else, it's in the Lord. And two things specifically arrested my attention. He says he will make my feet like deer's feet. Think about that he will make my feet like deer's feet. What is that? He'll make them swift. He will make those

who have faith, he will make their feet light deer's feet. So that they can move. Where do they have to move? They need to move out of the problem. He may be saying something physically, but I think more than anything else he's talking emotionally and spiritually. Your feet, if you're a person of faith, moves you out of all the mess. It moves you out of all the problems. It puts you in a different place. And what he says, is it makes you, what, he will make me walk on my high hills. Not h-e-e-l-s. H-i-l-l-s. He will make me walk on my high hills. The subject in both of those last statements is not you, it's not me. It's he. Faith doesn't come on your own. He will make. He will make, not me. Not me will make. Not I will make. He will make. When I read that I thought wow. That is solid. That's exactly what I want my life to be. I want to have faith. And because he will make me have faith, he will help me have faith. He will make me walk on high hills. He will make me have deer's feet. So, what he's saying is, what Habakkuk is saying to his people is, God's going to give you what you need if you'll have faith. You see why I wanted to share that with you? I think if you ask the 11 of us who were there at that study on Tuesday, I think if you were to ask us was that a good study? I think we would all said yes. And I'll tell you how I deduced that it was a good study, every man who was there had something to say. One comment led to another, and they were basically all saying the same thing, which is the just shall live by faith. That's all we have. Now, all of us at that study were older. And I realize not every man who's a part of this church can come you know. These were men who basically were retired. I'm not retired, but I had little flexibility in what I do. I figure the preacher ought to go. You know if you're having a Bible study and I love to go. But it was clear what we were all saying. It was clear.

You may know this person you might know of this person. This is Alyse Nash. I'm on I'm going to tell you Alyse's story. I have been messaging with her this week and I asked her if I could share her story. She said sure. She is the daughter of Bill and Judy Robinson. Bill Robinson is a preacher. You might know Bill, you might know of him. You may know him. They may be a good friend of yours. I don't know. But Alyse is their daughter, Bill and Judy's daughter. And I'm going to read - a social media influencer wrote an article about Alyse. And I'm going to read it to you. It's not very long. I'm going to read it to you. And here's what he said about her. Well, let me show you before I show you that, let me show you these are her two boys, Chase and Easton. Chase is 12, Easton is nine.

And this is what an influencer said about Alyse. He said, "Let me tell you about true faith. Let me tell you about an undeniable belief that things are going to be just fine. Even when you have received the worst news imaginable, even when you are days from going to heaven. It was three weeks ago when she was sent home to die. 38-year-old Alyse Nash was hoping her brain scan would bring her good news. April the eighth was when the bad news arrived. The brain cancer had spread. The glioblastoma was out of control. She said I was sent home, not to die, but to live. To live every moment I have left. Alyse Nash was given four to six weeks to live." That was 23 days ago. So, it's even less now. "Since she received the news, she has been preparing for her journey to the other side. Said Alyse, I'm filled with joy because I know where I'm going. Alyse has had four surgeries this year alone. Her treatments have been stopped. She's living her final days in hospice care. It was an idea cooked up by Alyse weeks ago. What if she invited family and friends and neighbors to a party? Not just any party. I called it, she said, the come say goodbye before I die party. Over 200 people shared hugs and kisses and stories and just fond farewells. She said I thought it would be nice if my friends greeted me here before we meet up there. We laughed and we worshiped, and we loved. I wanted to tell everyone at the party to keep fighting to get back up there after they're knocked down. And her take on the party: "Who wants

a dead funeral?" she said. The party gave us a chance to visit while we were alive. No doubt Alyse has thought a lot about going to heaven. She worries about her son's 12-year-old Chase and nine-year-old Easton. I want my boys to be taken care of. Hopefully I'm leaving them with enough love to remind them what's really important. I asked Alyse what her message is to her children and us? Love deeply, she whispered. Don't worry about things that are not important. Alyse wants us to know that while she's worried about family and friends she's fine. While she perhaps has 10 days left, 20 max, she is trusting God will welcome her to his kingdom. She said the thought of taking my last breath and going to heaven comforts me. It's going to be quite the adventure. Alyse Nash has been looking at the pictures that were taken at "the come to say goodbye before I die" party. Her heart is warmed as she sees the love and comfort that over 200 people shared."

Now, you know what's going on now from that. Let me read something she's written. She said, "I'm not special. My situation is not unique. People have cancer. People die. I'm not the first and I certainly won't be the last to battle something. Find the joy, look forward to the forever and let everything else go." And then she said, she quoted Ecclesiastes three. "So, I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. Be happy to enjoy this life as long as I can. Throw my head back and laugh as much as I can. My heart is full. Actually, it's overflowing with immense gratitude. Thank you to all who those who helped make it a wonderful day thank you to the 200-plus who took time out of their weekend to join us. It's like an instead-of-being-dead funeral and no one can bring us back to see what happens after we die." Again, she quotes from Ecclesiastes three verse 22. "I was able to be wrapped in lots of warm hugs, reminisce about days gone by and share many See-you-soons with those I love and have cherished throughout my life. I'm incredibly proud of Chase and Easton as they have handled Saturday well, all the people, plus in general, how they're doing. They're amazing boys, God has blessed me greatly. Remember the joy in what is to come. I am sad for my boys but I'm not sad. I will be at peace filled rest." And the last verse that she quotes is from Habakkuk three verse 18. "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord I will take joy in the God of my salvation."

If at the end of my life it is such that God allows me to know that my days are numbered. and soon. What she's done is what I'd like to do. I would like to be able to say my goodbyes to some of you, all of you. And to share thoughts. I don't know if it'll happen. I know I'm preaching it this morning, and I don't know what the future holds. I don't even know if that would happen. But I'm just saying what she's doing is she showing us what Habakkuk said, that's what she's doing. And then she's not the only one. There are people that I've had conversations with this past week who were dealing with some very difficult things. And I can't, I won't remember to quote it verbatim, but when I talked to the man, he said something like, we hug each other, we take it a day at a time, and we fully trust in God. Amen to that. Amen to that. And they're dealing with their circumstances by having faith. It's, it's the faith that Habakkuk was talking about. And that's what I would encourage us to do today.

Why preach this lesson? I just had to. If I didn't preach it, I was going to hold it till I did preach it. So, I wanted to preach it today, I want to tell you about Alyse. And I want you to consider your own circumstance. I don't care if you, you may be here this morning and you might know something that the rest of us don't know. You may have been told that you don't have long to live. It's okay if you're a person of faith. It's okay. You look forward to something better. Something that's eternal. And that's the power of having the Spirit of Christ in us. We can look forward to that. These kinds of lessons, these

kinds of stories, these kinds of thoughts, these kinds of phrases, these kinds of passages, these kinds of idea that helps us understand how we get through these times in our life. They help me and I hope that they will help you this morning. You may have figured out from Kenneth's song selections this morning that he was preaching about faith. He was singing about faith, and we were singing about faith. We were singing about promises. We were singing about God is faithful. We were singing that faith is the victory. We sing about all those things. And it was to help us think about the thing that I wanted us to conclude with today: that the just shall live by faith. That's my prayer. That's my prayer for me. It's my prayer for my family. It's my prayer for you. And may God help us to do just that. The just shall live by faith.