

A Foretaste of the Best of Times

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Date: 29 September 2024

Preacher: James Eglinton

- [0 : 0 0] This is the word of the Lord, a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to the Shigianoth.
- O Lord, I have heard the 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 Teemun and the Holy One from Mount Peron. His splendor covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. His brightness was like the light, raised flash 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.
- These were the everlasting ways. I saw the tents of Qashan and Affliction. The curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was your wrath against the rivers, O Lord?
- [1 : 0 8] 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 sheath from 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 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 a fury.
- You threshed 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 if to devour the poor in secret.
- [2 : 0 9] You trampled the sea with your horses, the surging mighty waters. I hear and my body trembles. My lips quiver at the sound.
- The rottenness enters into my bones. My legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon the people who invade us.
- Though the fig trees should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.
- Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deers.
- He makes me tread on my high places to the choir master with stringed instruments. God's word. James.
- [3 : 0 7] Thank you, Corey. So this is our fifth sermon. I'm going through the book of Habakkuk, this and our final sermon as well.

This short little book, in the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament, only three chapters. And it's a book written by someone who is facing what feel to him like the worst of times.

The society that he lives in is crumbling, and it's about to fall apart. He is living in the immediate aftermath of a world war. And the side that has won the world war is now advancing on where this guy, Habakkuk, lives.

And they are coming like a plague of locusts. They're coming to devour resources. They're coming to pillage. They're coming to enslave. And in the midst of all of this, these terrible times, Habakkuk is someone you'll see in chapters one, and two, who wrestles with God, who gets close enough to God to ask him, why is this happening and what are you doing about it?

Isn't this supposed to be your world? Aren't you supposed to be eternal? Aren't you supposed to be good? So he wrestles with God, and he asks God to tell him, what is your plan for this world?

[4 : 23] And in the midst of all of that, as he can look out and see like a cloud of terrible times rolling in over this desert plain towards him, Habakkuk somehow is able to find peace and also able to find joy even in the midst of what to him feel like the worst possible circumstances that could befall him.

Now that is a timely but also a provocative idea for people who are formed in the kind of culture that we come from.

The idea that even of the worst times that you could possibly imagine were to land on your doorstep, it's still possible to have joy and peace.

And I think that's provocative in our culture because our culture encourages us to, and this is a great word, it's a terrible thing to do, but it's a great word, to catastrophize.

So catastrophizing is when you maybe you'll recognize this in your own life, you'll certainly if you think about it, recognize it in the culture around us. And what you imagine is when you treat every day with whatever the big challenges in that day as though you are on the edge of a cliff, the edge of a catastrophe, whatever problems you are facing today, the stakes have never been higher for the entirety of the future of the world.

[5 : 53] Life every day is this high stakes game. And as well as that where you imagine that the worst outcomes are about to happen, for you're prompted to see the worst than other people.

Okay, so you live always on the edge of catastrophe. It's in your doom scrolling, it's in the evening news, it's all over the place. It's in people rioting on the streets.

It's in a generation of teenagers burdened by anxiety. Okay, so the world around us pushes us to catastrophize.

But the culture around us also recognizes that catastrophizing is not good for you. It's not a good way to live. And our culture gives us ways to deal with it.

So there's an article, you can read it on the BBC website about why you shouldn't catastrophize. And the gist of the article is this. Something is what pessimists do, and it's really bad for you.

[6 : 54] But also, well, the thing is you don't know for sure if bad things will happen tomorrow. Maybe good things will happen tomorrow, but you can't know until they happen. So official BBC guidance, don't be an optimist or a pessimist, just be a realist.

And only live in today. Don't let tomorrow's burdens crush you. But the problem with that advice, if you are a Habakkuk, is the Babylonians are coming.

The bad tomorrow is you're not a realist by saying, well, let's wait and see what they're like when they turn up here. You know what they've done everywhere else. You know what's coming.

So if you're Habakkuk and you could read the internet back in his day, why not catastrophize? Why not just collapse into anxiety?

How could you possibly find peace and joy knowing that what is about to happen is about to happen? Turning away from the BBC, you can read an article in The Guardian giving you advice, very kind of secular advice on how not to catastrophize, and very secular in our culture's sense in that all of the solutions you need come from within yourself.

[8 : 04] So The Guardian approach. If you are tempted to catastrophize, step one, accept yourself. Accept how wonderful you are because although you're very anxious, an anxious person beneath the anxiety is a really energetic person, and you're just misdirecting your energy into anxiety.

So instead, why don't you direct your creativity somewhere else and take up a hobby? Do something creative with all that energy instead of catastrophizing.

And then if you really need to, maybe set aside a worry time every day, half an hour, and you let yourself catastrophize then, but then you move on with other 23 and a half hours of your day.

And then maybe learn how to self-soothe. Find things that will make the catastrophe feel not so bad. Okay? Habakkuk might say, the Babylonians are coming.

An invading army is about to pillage, about to take all of our resources, about to enslave us, and life-changingly bad things are about to happen.

[9 : 12] A creative hobby, as I'm watching these Babylonians arrive, that's not going to help me very much. Self-soothing, having half an hour a day to worry about the Babylonians.

I don't think that Habakkuk would find the Guardian's approach helpful. So that makes what you read in the book of Habakkuk, that in the worst possible times, it's possible also to find joy and peace, makes that all the more provocative to people in our generation, because the solution to this isn't something that you find within yourself.

It's not that Habakkuk learns to self-soothe. That's terrible times around folding around him. So the way that he faces this is very different to the kind of solutions that the culture around us offers us.

So that's what we're going to look at tonight. How does Habakkuk find joy and peace, bearing in mind what is about to unfold in his life? His worst nightmare is happening. Now the last chapter of Habakkuk is a song.

So when Akhorey read it, if you didn't get that, it's a song. And the book of Habakkuk, so I've said a couple of times in this series, is a book of songs. So chapter one is his Song of Lament.

[10 : 25] How long, O Lord, will you let these terrible things happen? Chapter two is a funeral dirge for the Babylonians as they advance on him. Their doom is already secure, however terrifying they might be.

But chapter three is a very distinct kind of song, a very unusual song. And so what we're going to do is look tonight, just in two points.

First of all, the song itself, the very distinct kind of song it is. And then secondly, we're going to look at the joy and the peace that Habakkuk finds in singing this kind of song.

Now there's a key detail here that we get in verse one of chapter three. I was curious to know how Kori would pronounce this word, because it doesn't get said a lot.

And the word is shigionoth. Okay, so a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet according to shigionoth. Now you might have noticed if you've read through the Old Testament, and particularly in the book of Psalms, that this stuff all happened in Hebrew, first written in Hebrew.

[11 : 30] And we're reading an English translation. And in our translations, almost all of the words are in English. But sometimes there are Hebrew words that just don't, well, we don't have them in Hebrew letters.

They're in Latin script for us to read them. But they don't get translated into words in our language. So the most common one is Seila. You'll see this throughout the Psalms. Lots of points, Seila.

It was at various points in Habakkuk's song in chapter three there, Seila. And that doesn't get translated into an English word, because translators just don't know what it means for sure.

It's a musical term, but what exactly we don't know. And it turns out it's very hard to translate words if you don't know what the original one means. And shigionoth is a term like that.

It's a Hebrew musical term, a very uncommon one, but an extremely important one. And a lot of translators aren't confident enough to know what it means to turn it into an English word for us.

[12 : 30] So Habakkuk three verse one, this is a prayer, it's directed to God, but it's a song prayer. It's a song directed to God of a very distinct kind.

And the kind is a shigionoth. And I think that the most helpful, the most mind blowing explanation of what a shigionoth that I've ever read is, is from a theologian called John Owen.

So he was an English theologian, he was a professor at the University of Oxford back in the day, a few hundred years ago. And he was a really perceptive reader of the Bible.

And John Owen noticed that there's only one other song in the Bible that gets called a shigionoth. And it's in the book of Sam's and Sam seven. So Sam seven is written by King David.

And it's written in a time of terror in his life. His own worst nightmare is unfolding around him. People are coming to kill him. He's on the run and he is extremely vulnerable.

[13 : 32] And those circumstances all around him feel very real. And the Sam is very upfront about all of that. He's really pouring out what it feels like for your life to be in danger, pouring that out to God.

But at the same time in Sam seven, whilst feeling all of that, David also realizes that God is with him and simultaneously therefore that he's never been more secure.

So a shigionoth in Sam seven is when both of those realities are felt at the same time. And so John Owen said that a shigionoth song exercises all the affections.

So in his old fashioned English, what that means is it exercises every emotion that you could feel at the same time. And it touches each part of your emotional life, the entirety of your experiences, the terrifying, the comforting touches them at the same time.

It makes you feel the hope and the fear. That makes you feel the joy and the sorrow. And the grace of God is the thing that binds it all together.

[14 : 44] So shigionoth songs, they're not fake, twee, sentimental, emotionally one dimensional songs for your meant to act.

Although the world feels like it's falling apart around you, you're meant to act like it's all sunshine and roses. But shigionoth songs are also not cynical songs.

They're not despairing songs. And shigionoth, you could put it like this, it's catastrophe that never catastrophizes.

And to borrow from John Owen again, he had this amazing illustration for the effect that knowing how to experience and sing a shigionoth song, knowing how this will transform you as a human being.

And it's the illustration of a ship, a sailboat. So if you have a sailboat on the sea and it has wind only coming to the sails from behind it, that will move it forward.

[15 : 46] If you have a ship and the only wind that's coming to it is a side wind, hitting it on the side, that's a wind that opposes it, it's not going to make any great progress going forward. But you know how to make a boat, a sailboat go fastest?

It's actually to have both winds at the same time. You have to have an opposing wind from the side and a supporting wind from behind, and this creates the effect of lift for a sailboat and it will go faster than if it had no opposition at all.

So John Owen said that this is what adverse circumstances, the worst of all times, does to us when we have the secure living relationship to God that the gospel gives us.

It actually gives you lift, so to speak, and it drives you towards God to realize that however real your terrible circumstances are, the security that you have in God is more real still, and you'll appreciate it more than you did if you'd never been in those terrible circumstances.

That kind of lift that pushes you faster to God is the same thing that Paul talks about in the New Testament. In the book of Romans, when he's talking about rejoicing and sufferings, because suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope.

[17 : 03] In that way, because this all starts with suffering, your suffering is what teaches you that God's love has been poured into your heart through the Holy Spirit. It's Paul's way of putting it, but he's talking about the same kind of thing.

He's talking about what it's like to sing a Shigionoth. As unusual as that word is, you've probably never heard it before, but I hope you never forget it. This song that he sings is a really distinct kind of song, this Shigionoth.

You could say that it's the song that means that it was the worst of times and it was the best of times, but through the lens of the gospel. The song itself, down to verse 15, is really a song that's all about the God of heaven coming down to earth, and Habakkuk's picture of what it is like when the God of heaven comes down to earth.

The ways that Habakkuk thinks of that are all drawn from earlier in the Bible. It's the story of what happened when the God of heaven came down to earth to rescue the Israelites when they were slaves in Egypt, how God protected them in the desert when they wandered for 40 years.

The song does this. That's really the central focus. In the midst of the terrible times, there is a God in heaven who's not indifferent to what happens to his people on earth.

[18 : 27] There's an effect of that on the way that Habakkuk is experiencing his circumstances, very specifically. Your worst nightmare in your life, if it were to unfold, is probably not going to be ancient Babylonians appearing on the outskirts of Edinburgh.

Habakkuk's life is the worst thing that you could imagine. In the midst of all this, God gives Habakkuk very specific ways to put that together with a reminder of how secure Habakkuk is, even in his worst nightmare happening.

The way that this works in the song is a way of reminding Habakkuk that however terrible the Babylonians might seem, whatever terrible things they can do to you, they are nothing compared to the power and the love and the protection of God.

The way that God communicates this to Habakkuk, and the way Habakkuk realizes this, is also to do with mountains. I don't know if you noticed that when Corey read through the song, how much of it is about mountains.

In verse 5, God scattered the eternal mountains, and I wonder if when he read that, if you were really listening and thinking about it, did you think, that's weird that the Bible says that mountains are eternal?

[19 : 56] I didn't think, I thought God was eternal. And then the everlasting hills sank low when God came down from heaven. And again, you might think, but why would the Bible say that the hills are everlasting?

Because the Bible teaches that the world is created and not eternal. The mountains, in verse 10, they saw God and writhed. And the mountains did this before God, when the God of heaven marched through the earth with fury to rescue his people.

Verse 13. But all of this was a way of teaching Habakkuk why he didn't need to catastrophize about the Babylonians. And the mountains are a really specific thing here, because when the Babylonians arrived in your town, if you live in Habakkuk's world, they also brought with them their own stories about the worlds, about how it began, about where the gods are, about which things you should fear, and how to live as a human being.

And the mountains played a huge part in how the Babylonians taught people all of these things. If you were a Babylonian, your belief was something like this, in the beginning, the mountains.

And in the mountains, there were these powerful beings that fought each other, and the victors in this terrible, inhospitable place became the gods.

[21 : 21] So the mountains, if you're an ancient Babylonian, are this, I mean, they're an ambiguous place because they're really frightening. They're inhospitable, it's very hard to live on a mountain top in the ancient Near East.

But those who in your stories had done that had become gods through that process. So it's a place of violence. It's a place that dominates your world.

And it's a place of chaos and power and danger. But if you're a pagan Babylonian, the mountains are also the source of life, because they represent fertility, they represent life, and your highest goddess, if you are a pagan Babylonian, was a goddess called Ninhursak, and she is the goddess of fertility, she is the mother of the mountains.

They're in her name, and if you assimilate into the Babylonian empire, what this will mean for you is, if you want to have a future at all, it's like the release valve on catastrophizing, if you want tomorrow to happen, if you want your animals to give birth, if you want to have children, you need to start, you better get down on your knees before Ninhursak, the goddess of the mountains, the mother of the mountains, because she is the goddess who represents fertility, which represents tomorrow for you.

This is, your future depends on it. So when the Babylonians arrive, they will want you to put your faith in the mother of the mountains, because if you don't, you don't have a future.

[23 : 00] But Habakkuk's song, in everything that it says about the mountains as eternal, they're not eternal, as everlasting, they're not everlasting. When God comes, the God of heaven comes to earth, the mountains melt.

You don't need to fear them. Now, maybe again, you listen to this and think, but that is so foreign. I live in Scotland, like I go in Monroe climbing, like I don't fear the mountains.

Let me update it. Our culture has its own huge set of idols, idols that tell you that your future depends on the outcome of how you interact with me, on you giving me what I want.

Make this your ultimate, make this the thing you need, the source of life, the source of your life's meaning, and if you don't center your life on it, then you are doomed, because your future depends on this.

But the message of Habakkuk is that just can't be true. All those things will melt and arrive when the God of heaven comes to earth.

[24 : 08] And that's why in this song, Habakkuk remembers the same kind of thing that you read in the New Testament in Romans 8, that whatever stories the Babylonians might come and tell Habakkuk about why he's doomed unless he joins in with the way that they see the world.

The reality is that neither death nor life, angels nor rulers, things present nor things to come, height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And that is why Habakkuk's song is this very particular kind of song, the Shigyanoth song. Knowing all about this about God doesn't make Habakkuk's life instantly easy.

It doesn't take all of that suffering away, but he knows that nothing can separate him from the love of God. Therefore, the song faces catastrophe, but it doesn't catastrophize.

And look at the way that it leaves him actually, okay? This is what a Shigyanoth song might look like in your life. Look at verse 16. He is trembling, his lips are quaking, his knees are knocking together, and he feels like he's about to crumble on the inside, yet I will wait quietly for the day of trouble to come upon the people who invade us.

[25 : 23] So for Habakkuk, that is Shigyanoth. That's the lift that the ship gets when however much there's a sidewind opposing it, the wind behind it is just stronger.

So how does that kind of song change you? How did it change Habakkuk? Okay? Second point, the joy that he has because of the song. So look at verse 17, though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit beyond the vines.

These verses are a picture of the local economy in Judah, in Habakkuk's day. And what he's imagining here is there are no grapes.

There is no wine to drink. That industry is gone. There are no olives for oil. And the sheep have been eaten by wolves. There are no cows to give us milk.

So it's a picture of societal collapse. And it begins with a very specific symbol that says this isn't anywhere else.

[26 : 28] This is where you live, Habakkuk. Because the fig tree is like the national symbol of his people. Even if the worst possible things happen to me where I live, this is not hypothetical for Habakkuk.

Even if total devastation happens. I mean, you could update this for Edinburgh. If every supermarket shelf is empty, if the taps run dry, if the markets crash, if I lose my job, if my overdraft is maxed out, if I lose all of my possessions, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

I will take joy in the God of my salvation. This is facing catastrophe without catastrophizing. This is what it looks like to prepare yourself with the knowledge that nothing can separate you from the love of God.

No catastrophe, however bad, can do that to you. There are no caveats in Romans 8 there. Here's why that can be the case.

And why believing this actually means that Habakkuk himself can't be the end of the story. We need someone like Habakkuk but better.

[27 : 54] Look at what Habakkuk expects to happen in verse 19, when the worst of times arrives for him. God, the Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the deers.

He makes me tread on my high places. What Habakkuk believes is, and he knows that God is his strength, and he believes that in the strength God will give him, somehow when the Babylonians come, Habakkuk will survive.

And the picture here is that he'll always be one step ahead of the unrighteous Babylonians. So look at the picture that he imagines himself into. It's that he imagines himself as being like a deer, a deer, a really agile animal who escapes to the mountain tops.

Have you ever tried to chase a deer on a mountain top? I haven't, but I can imagine that wouldn't be good at it. They're so agile there. That is, there's a safe place for them.

And that's how he imagines his future, even when things fall apart around him, that the Babylonians won't catch up with him, but through the strength that God will give.

[29 : 08] Now there's a really subtle thing that happens here, but when you see it, it will blow your mind, I hope, because Scripture does that. And again, you have to think about mountains, because the Babylonians are afraid of mountain tops in their religion, because the mountains are these dangerous places where the gods fight each other.

You can't live there. They're inhospitable. And God already in the song has humbled the Babylonians by bringing the mountain tops down low.

He makes them melt. He makes them crumble. Okay? The mountain top sinks low. But at the end of the song, what Habakkuk says in effect is, I don't fear the mountains.

And Habakkuk is lifted up high. Okay? So he goes to the place that they fear, because the thing that he fears is the living God.

Habakkuk doesn't fear gods who fight each other in the mountain tops. Habakkuk will take to the mountains. Can you imagine Habakkuk here saying, I to the hills will lift my eyes.

[30 : 16] From whence stuff come my name? He knows that it's safety comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. And whereas the Babylonians, the people who fear the mountains and worship the mother of the mountains are brought low, Habakkuk is saved.

That's what he expects by his life being lifted up to a high place. Now, the thing with the book of Habakkuk is that the New Testament is full of references to it.

And we've seen that a fair bit in this series. Full of references to how the salvation that God promised Habakkuk would ultimately come long after Habakkuk's own time. Habakkuk was a prophet.

He's a signpost who points forward to things that would happen after his own day. And in the New Testament, in lots of different places, it presents the fulfillment of everything God promised to do in the book of Habakkuk as coming through Jesus Christ.

And I've already said a lot about that in the sermons so far. But I want to end this series by showing you how to think about Habakkuk, not simply as someone that Habakkuk prophesied about, saying that someone will come.

[31 : 31] Someone will end all of this. And actually, as someone, Habakkuk himself, as someone whose own life in a very strange way is a revelation of what Jesus himself would be like.

So in theology, we call this a type, that Habakkuk is a type of Jesus. He was someone whose own life prefigured the life of Jesus.

Now think about this. How did Habakkuk learn to flourish in his own evil times? Well, he learned to flourish there by knowing that God would never abandon him.

By knowing that come what may, God would always be with him. By knowing that nothing could separate him from the love of God. And even the Babylonians couldn't do that.

But think about verses 17, 18, and 19, alongside a very specific part of the life of Jesus, which is his passion, his suffering, this intense period of suffering as he makes his way towards his crucifixion.

[32 : 40] As his suffering is about to begin, as Jesus knows that his own most evil times are now upon him, like the Babylonians are on the horizon, Jesus knows that this is in motion.

And he was hungry, and he found a fig tree, and the fig tree was bare, so he cursed it. And he knew that he was about to be struck, and he says that another Old Testament prophecy is about to be fulfilled.

Strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. We have verse 17 there, the flock cut off from the field.

But at that point, we're thinking about these two lives together, the life of Habakkuk and the life of Jesus going starkly different directions from here on.

Because for Habakkuk, when the fig tree was bare and when the flock was scattered, Habakkuk was saved by being raised to a high place.

[33 : 50] And there he knew more than anywhere else he had ever been. This is the lift, right? He knew that God was with him.

But for Jesus, everything was different. When the fig tree was bare, when his flock was scattered, Jesus was, he was also led to a hill like an animal, but not a free deer, you know, jumping with agility, all was one step ahead.

Jesus is bound like a lamb, like a goat, a sacrificial animal led to a hill. And his mountain was Golgotha, the place of the skull.

And he was raised up, but by being nailed to a cross. And there, when darkness descended on him, when his own worst times had reached their worst point, for the first time in his eternal existence, Jesus looked for God, the Father, and he couldn't find him.

He felt like God was not there. He felt utterly forsaken and abandoned by God.

[35 : 12] Because perfect Jesus in that moment had been made sin. All of our guilt was transferred onto him.

And that's the New Testament's way of putting it, that on the cross he became sin. And God the Father, I think of Habakkuk's words, a chapter back, he praised the God saying, you are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

And on the cross, those pure eyes cannot look at his own son. And in that moment, Jesus only had the worst of times.

There was no Shigianoth song for Jesus on the cross. Instead there's only a cry of desolation. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Don't you see when we start to put these lives together, how Jesus is the true and the better Habakkuk? Jesus endured being abandoned by God so that you never would have to.

[36 : 18] He injured a cry of desolation so that like Habakkuk, you have the option of a Shigianoth song. He was raised on the cross so that you could be raised to new life and to safety.

He injured the actual worst thing that has ever happened. So that however terrible things that happen in your life are, and Shigianoth never belittles them, but he endured that for the lift that you can get knowing that however strong a sidewind might hit you, that there is a wind behind you through the love of God and that is unstoppable and the lift will carry you through.

And the only way that Habakkuk himself could face the suffering, the final point of this whole series, the only way that Habakkuk, facing what he was facing, could do that and could flourish and could find joy and peace was that he, so what he knew was, this is what the song is all about, that the God of heaven will come to earth to save him.

And what he's already been told by God is that when the God of heaven comes to earth, it's going to be something unimaginable, I think all the way back to chapter one, when God starts to talk to him, he begins by saying, you won't believe it even when I tell you.

And the message of the Bible, Habakkuk lived before the incarnation of Jesus, before the cross, before the resurrection, we live after that. And the message of Habakkuk for us today is that the God of heaven did come down to earth in the most unimaginable way, in Jesus Christ, in a baby, in a manger, in a carpenter who became someone who hanged on a cross like a criminal, a lifeless body in a tomb of someone who suffered in your place, but whose resurrection changes everything, changes even our own worst nightmare is happening, and that is the gospel of the book of Habakkuk.

[38 : 26] Amen, let's pray. God of all hope, God of all grace, we thank you for the book of Habakkuk, for time that we've been able to spend together thinking about it, seeing it in new ways in order that we might see the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ in greater depth, emotionally, existentially, historically in so many ways.

So Lord, through that we pray that you would make us into people who know what it is in life in this world, with all of its sins and sorrows, with all of the evil that plagues it, that you would help us to be people who know what it is to sing Shigyanoth songs, to have the lift that the gospel gives us, shape us to be like your son, we pray.

Amen. Amen.