

Living by Faith in the Worst of Times

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[0 : 0 0] and we're gonna read from page 785, chapter two, verses one to four. Let's read together God's word. I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what he will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

And the Lord answered me, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. For still the vision awaits, it's a point of time.

It hastens to the end, it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come, it will not delay. Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. This is God's holy word. Good evening. If you have a Bible, as Corrie was saying, please keep it open at Habakkuk chapter two.

And tonight we're looking at verses two to five of that chapter. This is our third sermon on Habakkuk on this short three chapter long, very timely book from the Old Testament.

[1 : 1 7] If you haven't been here for the first two sermons, this is what you've missed out on. This is the really quick recap, just so you know, as I push you into the deep end of the swimming pool. So it's a book that's set 600 years before Jesus, and it's about this man, this prophet Habakkuk, who lives in extremely bad times, in the international fallout of a world war, and where he can see that there is an oppressive, unjust empire, the Babylonians, who are about to arrive, and they're about to take over.

They're about to assimilate his people. And that means that they expect everyone around them to adopt their values and their beliefs, their lifestyles, their ethics.

And Habakkuk is someone who doesn't want to do that because he already has beliefs and values and ethics and a lifestyle that all comes from a relationship, which is his relationship with the Lord, with the one true God.

And the book shows us this guy in this really terrible fraught context where he's wrestling with God, where he asks God, where are you? What are you doing?

As this is all about to happen, as the world starts to fall apart around me. And when he asks God, what are you doing? God starts off his answer to Habakkuk with, well, in the first place, you are not going to believe it when I tell you, but here's what I'm doing, I'm raising up the Babylonians, these people that you're terrified of and I'm sending them to you.

[2 : 5 4] And that's where God stops. And Habakkuk is left to wonder, how can that be the solution? What kind of an answer is that? But then he prays to God, comparing God to the Babylonian king.

And he says to God, aren't you supposed to be eternal? Aren't you supposed to be good? Aren't you the one who made us? And then you let this evil oppressive king come along and enslave us and destroy the world that you have made.

But then as Habakkuk asks that, he tells God, in effect, and this is really verse one of that reading there, where he says, I set myself on a watch tower. When he does that, it's like he's saying to God, okay, what you've told me is the start of your plan, but it can't be the whole thing.

There must be something beyond this, so I'm listening. I want the, I'm climbing up onto a watch tower, so to speak, because I want the bigger picture. So he's still listening to God and he's asking for God to keep talking.

But before, and God is going on to do that, okay, and that's what we're gonna focus on next Sunday night. But before God does that, God tells him what kind of person Habakkuk needs to be. Habakkuk needs to be, to live in this kind of context, to face evil times, and actually to flourish within them.

[4 : 2 4] And that is that he is going to have to be a just person who lives by faith, okay, and that's this great line from the book of Habakkuk, the righteous person or the just person shall live by his

faith.

And that's a line that gets quoted at different points in the New Testament, and we're gonna be thinking about that tonight. But to think about this sermon, it has two points really, and they're both, just to help you think about this, and they're both things that God told Habakkuk.

So the first point is that God tells him to wait in hope, okay, and for that we're looking at verses two and three, and the second thing is that he tells Habakkuk that there are two ways to live in this world, and that's verse four.

So the first thing when God tells him, which is that he has to wait in hope, God tells him, so the Lord answers him, write the vision, make it plain on tablets so he may run who reads it.

Again, this is set a really long time ago in a very different world and culture to ours, okay? But when God tells him, write this down, write this vision down on tablets, what God is telling him to do is to use the technology of the Babylonians to describe the downfall of the Babylonians, because in that world, if you want to write stuff down, you take wet clay and you flatten it out, and because it's wet, it's impressionable, so you take a reed and that's your pen and you write things down on it.

[5 : 59] And if you're doing this just, if you're going to the Babylon market to buy your onions and coriander, you can take wet clay and then you let your shopping list dry out and then when you're done, because it's just for you to use, you then put it back in water and you soak it and you can flatten it out and you can reuse it over and over, but if you're a Babylonian, you can use the same technology to write a message for other people, a message that will endure, a message to the future.

Okay, and even now, in 2024, you can go to museums all across the world and there are about 10,000 clay tablets from Babylon that still exist, messages to the future.

Okay, so what you do with that is you write down your message on this wet clay tablet and you bake it, you put it in a kiln and it goes hard and then that message can be taken all over the world and way into the future, it's something that will last.

And that's the kind of thing that God tells Habakkuk to do with the vision that he has, that he has to write it down on tablets. So this is God saying to him at the beginning, you have to take a long view of what I'm doing here, because this isn't just a note to self that will self-destruct in five minutes.

This is God telling him, use technology to write to people who will live way after you were around. That's the kind of long view that you have to take to understand the kind of person you have to be right now.

[7 : 35] So he has to write this message down or this vision down on a clay tablet for people, other people in the future. So Habakkuk is, and God telling him, this is what you need to do.

It's like God is telling him, okay, this is a hint for you Habakkuk. These bad times will outlast you. This isn't gonna get better in a hurry. It'll get worse before it gets better.

And you are writing on these tablets to give strength to people, to give encouragement to people, to tell people who will come after you that they have to be righteous people who live by faith, well after your lifetime.

It's kind of like the difference between, like if I told you, take a picture, okay, and send it on Snapchat, okay. Message for the, half of the people here will know what that is, okay, maybe. So you take a picture and you send it to someone and then it disappears. It's the social messaging service for the picture is only ever there for a second. And then I tell you, in fact, no.

[8 : 45] Take a picture, paint a picture, hang it in the Louvre in Paris. It's a completely different thing. You're thinking in a completely different timescale about the picture that you're making, right?

That it'll be seen by a lot of people over a really long time after your lifetime. So God is telling him at the beginning, you are writing down a message for the benefit of people who will live after you.

And you have to start thinking about being a person of faith, a righteous person. And this is an endurance challenge. So God tells him to do this.

And then God says, so that the person who reads it, who reads this message on this tablet may run. Now this is part of the challenge of reading the book of Habakkuk.

Commentators who write about this aren't completely unanimous about what they think this means. Some commentators think that it means, well, people read the message on the tablets and they run with the message, they spread the message.

[9 : 54] They're so struck with hope by what they have read that it actually sets them in motion and they run off to tell others. It could be. Or the other way that commentators read this is also to talk

about ways that the world of the Babylonians worked, which is that if you want to send a message to the next city alone, here's what you do.

You take a clay tablet, you write your message, and you bake the tablet so that it's hard, it's not just gonna turn to mush in someone's bag, and then there's a specific kind of job that you can have in that world, which is herald.

And to be a herald, you have to be good at two things. You have to be good at reading, okay, and that's not a skill everyone has and all that at that point, and you have to be a really good long distance runner.

So you take these tablets, you put them in your bag, and you actually run from city to city, and when you get there, you read what you've been told to read. So that's the other possibility.

But at one level, the key point is the same, that this message that Habakkuk has told to write down, this message of hope in really evil times, it's not a message just for him, it's a message that God wants everyone to hear.

[11:12] God wants this message to spread. Now, I've already said that when God tells Habakkuk to use a tool or technology that will outlast him to leave behind a message for future generations, God is already preparing Habakkuk for what he's about to tell explicitly, which is what you have to do now in these awful times, in this unjust world is you have to wait and hope.

This is, you have to have a completely different perspective on time to flourish in evil times. So God is directing Habakkuk towards that implicitly before he tells him explicitly.

But I was trying to think of a good way to illustrate this for us, okay? Because this could seem again just really so alien and hard for us to latch onto in Habakkuk's world.

But think about it like this, across Europe, we have lots of Gothic cathedrals, amazing buildings built in the Middle Ages.

So if you go to Paris and go to Notre Dame or if you go to Milan and go to the cathedral, the Duomo, you find all these buildings that took unimaginably long periods to build.

[12:28] Like in the cathedral in Milan, took 600 years to finish. Notre Dame in Paris took over 100 years. And if you were to go back to medieval Europe and find a stone mason who's working in one of these buildings, and you're trying to find a stone mason and recruit someone or a builder or something like that to work on this project.

You tell this person, I want you to start working on a project that will never be finished in your lifetime. It won't be finished in your children's lifetime, maybe not in your grandchildren's lifetime, but I want you to give the rest of your life to that.

That's the job I'm offering you. And eventually it'll be finished, but history will remember the building, but it won't remember you.

And that corner of that pillar that you chipped away on to make it beautiful, that tiny detail in the top and the back of the ceiling that you will know is there, but maybe no one else will ever see.

And that's the job I'm offering you, to invest your life in that. And the amazing thing with people back then is that, you can tell from all the buildings around us, a lot of them said, yes, I'll use my life for that.

[13:46] And I'll devote my life to that. And I think part of the reason for that is that they thought about time, really differently to the ways that we learn to think about time in our culture.

And that they thought about time in relation to eternity, more than we do. And they thought about the world in relation to God, more than we do.

And that's a really hard mentality for people in our age to imagine, even if we are Christians.

Because our culture teaches us that we are the main characters in our lives, and that time is short, and that the things you invest your life in, how foolish to invest your life in something that will never be finished in your lifetime, and that you will get no credit for, no one will ever applaud you.

Right, that's the kind of mentality that we absorb in our day. And so the buildings that we put up go up in a hurry. Usually then they end up under scaffolding, under not too long, and then we spend ages trying to do them up, walk around this part of town, you'll see a lot of that.

And then they fall down in a hurry as well. And the builders move on with the time that they have left in their lives. You know, in effect, what God is saying to Habakkuk is that to respond to his own evil times, to the state of the world in his day, he has to remember that the world isn't everything, and that there is a God in heaven, and that empires rise and fall, and times come and go, but there is a God in heaven.

[15 : 30] And that's just a hard thing for us to step into in 2024, because the norm around us everywhere else is people who imagine that there isn't a God in heaven, or they act as though there's not, and that time doesn't happen in the light of eternity.

One of my favorite illustrations for this is, it's a science fiction film, it's called In Time, starring Justin Timberlake, if you're a Justin Timberlake fan, in which case I feel bad for you, but it's a science fiction film, and it's set in a world where time is how you measure wealth.

And everyone has this digital reading on their forearm, a number, and that's how much time you have, how many days you have left to live, and the wealthier you are, the higher the number, and the poorer you are, the lower the number.

And in the film, it's like the global, you know, 0.5% of super wealthy people, somehow they have rigged the system so their number is always going up.

And the really poor people start off with quite a small number and it only ever goes down. But the film is about this character who somehow manages to hack the system, and he manages to steal a huge amount of time, slash wealth, from some super rich person, and he goes from being really poor all of a sudden to having this huge bank balance of days, that just goes up and up and up.

[16 : 56] And he moves into the world of the super wealthy, which means the people who have literally all the time in the world, and tries to pass himself off among them as one of them. But the thing that gives him away is very subtle, but it's that he moves around too quickly.

He's in too much of a hurry, and because all the people who have all the time and all the wealth, they're not in a hurry to do anything, because time just goes on and on and on.

And at one level, so the film is reflecting on what's fundamentally a deeply Christian question. It's a question that Christianity has given to our culture, which is how differently would you live in this life if you knew that your life was eternal?

How differently would you face devastating news? How differently would you face failures? How differently would you face your successes if you knew that this life is only the beginning, and actually that eternal life, the number of days only ever goes up?

And in a way, isn't that the kind of question that Habakkuk gets from God in verse three? The vision, for still the vision awaits, it's a pointed time.

[18 : 17] It hastens to the end, it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come, it will not delay.

So God asks Habakkuk to experience time differently because of eternity, because there is a God in heaven. And God asks him to experience what feels slow as though it actually feels fast.

So he's told to write down his vision for future people to read. But here's an important question as we read through the book. What exactly was the vision?

Maybe it was what he saw in chapter one, which is, the Oracle that Habakkuk saw, for God says, I am rising up at the Babylonians.

But there's a problem with that as we read the book, which is that the beginning of chapter one says that Habakkuk saw an Oracle, or a burden. And there's a specific Hebrew word for that in the original.

[19 : 30] But what God tells Habakkuk in chapter two, verse two is to write down something different, a different word, a vision. Not an Oracle, but something bigger.

So something bigger is a vision. It's not an Oracle, but something bigger. So something bigger that includes the Oracle, which is the bad news, the bad times are about to get worse. But for the vision is something bigger than that.

A vision that shows how God takes things that people mean for evil, and somehow God is able to use them for good. Where God somehow can permit an unjust empire to arise, and God somehow can use that to end injustice.

A vision also that shows you the kind of person you need to be in the midst of all of that. Someone who lives by faith, a just person by faith, a righteous person by faith in an unjust world.

So the vision is bigger than just what he saw in chapter one. And some commentators have said, and I think that they're right, that when God told Habakkuk to write down the vision, God was telling Habakkuk to write what we call the book of Habakkuk, chapters one, two, and three, the whole thing.

[20 : 46] God tells him to write down the Oracle in chapter one, and how he wrestled with God in chapter one, and God tells him to write down how he's engaging with God in chapter two, and what

God tells him he needs to be in chapter two, and then write down what he's going to say in chapter three, which is that he bursts into song, and that he's able to praise God even in the worst of times.

And if that's what God means when he tells him to write down the vision, then the penny drops for us in Edinburgh tonight as we read this, because what God tells Habakkuk is that God wants these three chapters to be written down, not on like a soggy wet tablet that'll just last for a day, but on hard-play tablets written for the future, for future generations.

This means that God wanted Habakkuk to write down these three chapters for you, for people in the future to read this in their own evil times, when we go through the worst of times, so that we can wait in hope, so that we can let eternity flood into how we think about, how we experience the times that we go through.

So God tells him to wait in hope, secondly, God tells him that there are two ways to live. So we're looking here at verse four. Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Now if you're reading through the chapter, the shift from verse three into verse four might feel really abrupt, because God has just been telling him, get these tablets, write it down, you're in for the long haul, but you're waiting in hope, think about people in the future beyond you.

[22 : 29] And then all of a sudden God shifts into talking about someone else, his soul is puffed up. But what God is doing here, when he says this to Habakkuk, is that God makes an abrupt shift, and he goes into talking to Habakkuk by saying, and he goes into talking to Habakkuk by a kind of comparison, where the comparison, the God says to Habakkuk, is a comparison between the Babylonian king and Habakkuk, and the kind of people that they are.

The Babylonian king, his soul is puffed up, but it is not upright within him, and Habakkuk, but that butts the contrast, the righteous shall live by faith.

And here's a way to understand this. If you were here last week, you'll remember this, if you weren't, this is in, it's just slightly before this in the book. In the chapter before, Habakkuk is wrestling with God in prayer.

He's asking God, what are you doing about this world of injustice? And he begins that prayer by saying to God, aren't you supposed to be eternal? And then he was on to compare God with the Babylonian king.

God, you're supposed to be eternal, and you're supposed to be so different to this king who's ruining the world. This king who oppresses people, this king who enslaves people, this king who makes himself rich by making us poor, aren't you supposed to be different to him?

[24 : 05] So Habakkuk has already said rhetorically to God, aren't you supposed to be eternal? Aren't you supposed to be different to the Babylonian king? But now when God replies, he actually flips this, and God turns the tables on Habakkuk.

And it's like a rhetorical question. God compares the Babylonian king to Habakkuk. And here's the thing that you need to see. When Habakkuk compares God to the Babylonian king, he begins by saying, aren't you supposed to be eternal?

Aren't you supposed to be different to him? But then when God flips this round in his reply, he says to Habakkuk, aren't you supposed to live in the light of eternity? Aren't you also supposed to be different to the Babylonian king?

So what would it look like for Habakkuk to be different to the Babylonian king? And this is something that next Sunday night sermon will be focusing on more, because that's what's about to come next in the book.

When God gives his own sort of diagnosis of Babylon, and why you can't build a life of flourishing there, and why Babylon is doomed from the beginning.

[25 : 20] But before God does that, God focuses Habakkuk on the kind of person that the Babylonian king is, and he's just the epitome of that whole world, and all that it could offer Habakkuk, and what Habakkuk is meant to be like.

And when God, in one line, it's this devastating portrayal of the Babylonian king.

God, in just a few words, sums up his whole life and pulls the rug out from under his feet. And there's this easy detail to miss here, but it's really important that you don't.

It's why God starts off with, we have this in English as behold. Okay, look at this, don't miss this. Okay, check this out. His soul is puffed up, it's not upright within him.

Okay, there are two things that God says here that sum up this whole man at the head of this empire, really powerfully. His soul is puffed up, it's not upright within him.

[26 : 22] What does that mean? Well, it means that most fundamentally, he is proud of himself. It means that if you were to ask him to justify his existence, to tell us, why are you acceptable as a human being?

Why are you worthy of a place in this world? All of his answers would be self-referential. They would all be things about himself.

He would talk to you about things he owns, people he owns, countries he owns, things he has done. He would talk to you about his achievements in life, how he deserves his place in this world. And even in his mind, how he deserves the approval of his gods because of all the things he has done. And there's a voice, there's a voice that constantly whispers in his ear, achieve this and then you'll be good enough.

Win that and then you'll be good enough. Find acceptance from this group and that group and then you'll be good enough. Belong to the right empire. Be Babylonian and then you'll be good enough.

[27 : 40] And when you ask him to justify your existence, all that whispering really comes out in a roar of pride, of arrogance, of self-righteousness, self-justification.

And above all, there's really no God above him who keeps him humble. He's the captain of his own soul. And that same voice whispers in your ear and mine as well.

In Edinburgh in 2024. In a place like Edinburgh where achievement matters so much and group acceptance matters so much. It's often it's not just the gentle whisper, it's the kind of mantra of our lives, right?

It's the unspoken assumption that you have to justify yourself and your place in this world. You have to be good enough. But when God looks at the king of Babylon, God sees that that's all a facade, that the pride is just an illusion.

It's how he presents himself to the world, but his inner life is a mess. His soul is puffed up. It's not upright within him. So we have this expression here, the soul is puffed up.

[28 : 59] If you want to understand what this means in the Bible, Paul in the New Testament uses a picture, the same kind of picture, and he uses it quite often when Paul writes about what it means to be arrogant, what it means to be proud or to be puffed up.

And when Paul does this, he uses, through the kind of medical term, it's a term to think about your body, something that is inflated, that really you don't want to be inflated, filled up with air that shouldn't be filled up with air, and filled with nothing, in a sense, as well.

And if you apply it to your body, it's actually a sort of disease term. So think of a distended stomach. Think of, and it's full of air. You're meant to see this and think, this is swollen, this is pained, this is something that's ready to burst.

And in the Bible, that's what it means when it says, do not be arrogant, do not be puffed up, do not be filled with nothing. And the nothing really is the kind of myths of your self-righteousness, your self-justification.

So although he says that he's great, that he is, the greatest thing you could say at the end of his life is, I am so proud of myself, and I give no glory, like none of the glory rises higher than that in my life.

[30 : 20] I am the end of the story for me. That's what he says, but actually you're meant to look at this and kind of feel sorry for him, in the way that you'd feel sorry for someone who has this pained, distended picture to cope with.

So his inner life is a mess, his soul is not upright within him. But what comes next is that God compares the Babylonian king to Tabakuk. The king may be like that, he may have this bloated life of pride and arrogance, a pained life to look at.

He talks about himself as though there's no perfect God to confess his sins to, his forgiveness he needs to seek, and he can really be his own justification.

But when God compares the two of them together, Habakkuk and the king, it's as though God is saying to Habakkuk, aren't you supposed to be different to that? But, okay, this is the contrast, the righteous person shall live by faith.

Or shall live by his faith in Habakkuk. Now if you were Habakkuk and you're hearing this, obviously in Hebrew, thousands of years ago, there's a really important point here, that I just need you to focus, and that's late in the Sunday night, but focus for a moment on what I'm going to say here,

because it's really important about how Habakkuk hears this in Hebrew.

[31 : 54] You know how some words have a double meaning? Like in English, the word bark. It can be the stuff that grows on a tree, it can be the noise that a dog makes, and the double meaning is really obvious, which is which.

You don't need much context at all to say, you know, I heard a bark, or I grazed my knee on some bark. You know which is which. But there are also words that have a double meaning, and it's a bit more ambiguous.

Even you need a good bit more context to know which is which. So let's take the word draft. If I tell you that tomorrow you'll be sitting in your office and a draft will come in, you don't know from that, does that mean that the window's open and some wind will come in, or that someone's going to put some unfinished work on my desk?

So you need more context. But in some languages, there are some words that have a double meaning that's really close, closer than that example. And where you do, you need context to know what's what.

But when the double meaning is so close, you can also use that word ambiguously to say both, both the meanings. And the word that we have for faith, the righteous person shall live by his faith, is a word like that.

[33 : 19] And this is something that you might have noticed without realizing it. For example, we're reading this from the English Standard Version, where the English translation is, the righteous person shall live by his faith. But if you've got an NIV Bible, what you will see is that the righteous person shall live by his faithfulness.

And this one Hebrew word has that ambiguous double meaning. It can be faith, which is something that latches on to something other than itself. But in lots of points in the Old Testament, it's faithfulness.

It's actually what you do consistently. And those are two different things. They're very closely related, but they're not the same thing. And if you're a Habakkuk, what you've just heard from God in Hebrew is that you're not like the king of Babylon, you are a righteous person.

And what that means is that you live by your... and you hear two things at once, faith and faithfulness. And this is why translators...

If you've ever tried to translate something and it has a double meaning, it's really difficult to get that across in another language, unless other language also happens to have exactly the same double meaning. That doesn't usually happen.

[34 : 32] So that's why translators, when they're translating Habakkuk into English, go for either faith or faithfulness. But the double meaning is really important, and this is why.

If what this means is you have to live by your faithfulness, well, that's really emphasizing that to be a truly righteous person in this world, one way to do that is you are perfect.

In this unrighteous world, in this evil world, everything you do is good. You live by your faithfulness. But if what it means is that to be a righteous person in an unrighteous world, you live by faith, a faith that latches on to something that's not you, that's not the things you have done, that sounds like a really different message, doesn't it?

So why does God say something that sounds so ambiguous to Habakkuk when he's trying to work out, how do I live in these evil times? Here's how the New Testament resolves this, most directly when it's addressing you and me.

So in Galatians, Paul explains it like this, quotes this verse, and he says that nobody can justify themselves before a perfect God through their own religious moral performance.

[35 : 53] God is perfect and we are not. So we can't be justified by the law, and that's why. And then he quotes Habakkuk, the just person shall live by faith, not by their works and their efforts.

Because your own life is imperfect, the thing that you have faith in is Jesus' perfect life and his death in your place and his resurrection to new life so that you can have a new life.

But here's where I think that there's kind of a beauty in this, in the double meaning in Habakkuk, which is that if we are Christians, we're made just by our faith in Jesus, but Jesus is truly the righteous one because of what?

Because of his faithfulness. So he's the true fulfillment of Habakkuk 2.4, the true righteous person who lives by his faithfulness.

Is it that the righteous person shall live by his faith or by his faithfulness? The gospel actually brings these two things together, and that it tells you and it tells me that we can be made righteous before God by our faith, but that faith is faith in Jesus' faithfulness and him as the faithful one.

[37 : 18] And if you grasp that, if you believe it, then immediately you become a completely different kind of person from the get-go than the king of Babylon, where life is all about me and the things I do and my achievements, or I'm defined by my failures to achieve the things that I think I need to be in order to be justified in this world, in existing.

And I've got this facade of being proud of myself, of boasting in myself, of all the glories staying with me and are somewhere in this world. The gospel actually, in giving you faith and the faithfulness of Christ, gives you a completely different way to be.

It's a different source for how to live from day to day. Now I just want to say this closing point, closing statement. Maybe you're hearing all this and you think the Babylonian Empire, though, who is the king of Babylon to me?

You know, I live in Edinburgh in 2024, and that was thousands of years ago. If that's you, and you happen to read through the New Testament, and you get to the last book, the Book of Revelation, what you will see there is that actually we all live in Babylon.

If you were to ask, the Book of Revelation, this guy, John, when he's on an island called Patmos, and God gives him a vision and tells him to write it down, and the vision is very like Habakkuk.

[38 : 47] It's that God says, I'm raising up Babylon. Babylon the Great, and it's actually the whole world as it sets itself against God. And Babylon the Great will fall, and God is making all things new, and there are two ways to live.

So the Bible actually says that Habakkuk and Babylon, we all live there. And we're just as much surrounded by Babylon here in Edinburgh as Habakkuk was.

So what we're going to see next week, going through the rest of chapter 2, is God's diagnosis of Babylon, and why we can't find our ultimate meaning, our ultimate fulfillment, our ultimate joy in this world.

And yet what we're going to see in the rest of the book of Habakkuk is that that is where God has called us to be here and now, and through the gospel, people who are made righteous by faith, in Christ's faithfulness, we're able to rejoice, even in the worst of times, in the here and now.

Amen. Let's pray. Father God, thank you for the hope of the gospel, for all that it offers us in newness of life, and being able to be made righteous, not because of ourselves, but through the righteousness, the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

[40 : 03] So Lord, give us fresh hope, help us to lean into that new way of living and being in the light of eternity through what we've heard. Thank you for this in Jesus' name, amen.