

FROM SOBBING TO SINGING

(Prov. 3:5-8)

Introduction:

1. The book of Habakkuk ought to be a favorite of Christians. In this short little book is found the miseries of life in the world, the instruction of God to His people, and the solace/joy God's people can have in spite of the darkness.
2. Let us consider this morning the instruction of the book of Habakkuk: the crying out to God; the learning from God; and the trusting in God.

Discussion:

I. Crying out to God (Hab. 1:1-4).

- A. Violence, theft, injustice, oh my! The state of Judah in general and Jerusalem in particular was dreadful in the eyes of the godly Habakkuk. Everywhere he looked he saw corruption, suffering, and godlessness.
 1. This is what had led to the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722BC (Hos. 4:1, 2ff; Amos 4; esp. vv 1, 12).
 2. This was being condemned by the prophets of Judah (Mic. 2:1, 2; Is. 1:10-20).
 3. This had been warned against from the beginning of Israel (Deut. 4).
- B. We too, today, often cry out to God against the violence, theft, and injustice in the world.
 1. We see it snowballing in our country/culture and are left weeping on our knees in prayer.
 2. We see it in the so-called Christian world, with the "robbing of God (Mal. 3:8).
 3. We see it in the Lord's church, with the commands/expectations of Christ unfulfilled.
 - a. People leaving the faith.
 - b. People treating the faith like a common thing.
 - c. People always learning but never growing more Christ-like.

II. Learning from God.

- A. God answered Habakkuk's tears with the prophecy of the punishment of Judah at the hands of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) in Hab. 1:5-2:20.
 1. In 1:5-11, God declares the punishment is coming and will astound all who hear.
 2. In 1:12-2:1, Habakkuk (astounded!) complains about the wickedness of the Babylonians and that surely God would not use them to punish His people.
 3. In 2:2-20, God explains that He will indeed use the Babylonians to punish His people, but that He will also punish the Babylonians for their wickedness and idolatry. In short, "Habakkuk, I'm God, I know what I am doing".
- B. God has answered our tears today as well. His word has revealed to us how He will deal with the faithful and the unfaithful. The book of Habakkuk is actually one of the means of giving us our answers.
 1. Consider what Rom. 12:17-21 teaches us about how God will deal with the wicked world. Our job is to overcome and be saved, God will avenge!
 2. Consider what God has told us concerning His judgments (Rom. 2:6; Ps. 62:12; Prov. 11:21; 24:12; Eccl. 12:14).
 3. Consider what God has said regarding the unfaithful in His church (Gal. 6:7, 8; Matt. 7:21-23; 1 Pet. 4:17-19; Heb. 4:12; et al).

III. Trusting in God.

- A. Habakkuk learned from God and his sobbing turned to singing. Ch. 3 is Habakkuk's declaration of trust in God, especially verses 17-19. Habakkuk may not have been happy about the coming Babylonian storm, he may not have understood everything, but he understood enough to put his trust in God and His words (cp. Josh. 24:15; prov. 3:5-8; Jer. 10:23, 24; Heb. 11).

- B. We too, today, must learn from God be comforted. We may not enjoy the persecution, tribulation, and darkness of the world; but we can take solace (even joy) from trust in God and His words (John 14:1-3; Phil. 4:4-9; the entire book of Revelation, especially 22:20).

Conclusion:

1. Oh, the troubles God's people encounter in this world. Let us not lose heart, but rather dedicate ourselves to a deeper and more robust study of God's word to enable us to turn our sobbing to singing.
2. If we heed God's words and believe them, we too can "rejoice", though "we are killed all day long".
3. Invitation.

MORE ON "FROM SOBBING TO SINGING"

1. REALITY #1 = John 15:15-27; Acts 5:40, 41; 14:22; 1 Pet. and Rev.
2. REALITY #2 = John 16:33; 2 Cor. 4; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Pet. 2:21-25; 4:19 (cp. 2 Tim. 1:12); 2 Thess. 1; and the book of Revelation (the fulfillment of Matt. 16:18).
3. REALITY #3 = Forewarned is Forearmed!! Ps. 1; Eph. 6:10-24; 2 Pet. 1:1-11; et al.
4. The practicality of Habakkuk aids our more "academic" walk in the light. Note Hab. 2:4 in its immediate context! It is a message of "run, Forrest, run!" Note how this verse is used in the NT (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38):

Rom. 1:17 = The word of God revealed to mankind (aka THE faith-cp. Jude 3) in the Gospel is the means of salvation. Those who live by it (the faith; the word of God) shall live and be justified (Rom. 3:20, 28).

Gal. 3:11 = Salvation is NOT by means of observing the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses served to instruct us about sin and our need for salvation (Gal. 3:19, 23, 24; cp. Rom. 3:20). Salvation is by faith, that is, those who will be justified are those who live by faith (Gal. 3:11).

Heb. 10:38 = Context is that we are NOT saved by the keeping of the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses was a shadow of THE faith to come (Heb. 9:23; Gal. 3:25). Now that THE faith has come, do not turn back to the Law of Moses (Heb. 10:19-31). Christians must continue in THE faith and not turn back to the Law of Moses, those who will be justified are still those who live by THE faith (Heb. 10:35-39).

Rom. 8 = Although it never quotes it or says it directly, this chapter is one of the most powerful arguments that the justified are those who live by faith.
5. Rev. 2:10 = Those who continue to live by faith, no matter the opposition, shall receive the crown of life.