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## OF COMPLAINT, CASTIGATION, & CHRIST

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### Part 2 of Habakkuk

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Habakkuk 1:1-11 | February 23, 2003

We're gonna do Habakkuk. We've just finished the Book of Ephesians. I'll give you guys a couple minutes to find Habakkuk. It's in the Old Testament. It's a good book. We're gonna be in this book for about a month. This is our second week in. We did Habakkuk 2:4 and the introduction to the Doctrine of Faith last week. And this week we will just keep on trucking in Habakkuk. Once we get into the new building, we'll do the Book of Ecclesiastes, my favorite book of the Bible.

So as you're looking for Habakkuk, I'll pray for our time. Good to see you all. And we will get to work. Father God, we thank you for your great plan to redeem us from Satan, sin and death. And Lord Jesus, we thank you for coming to implement that great plan of salvation by living without sin and dying in our place on the cross and resurrecting to conquer Satan, sin and death. And Holy Spirit, we thank you as our great God for also coming to inspire the writing of Scripture, to convict us of sin, to reveal Jesus to us, and to illuminate the Word that you have inspired so that we can be in relationship with our Lord Jesus and we can be reconciled through him back to our Father.

God, you are good from beginning to end, and we just ask as we study your Word today, that you would illuminate this Scripture, that we might love Christ and we might draw near to you. That's our prayer in Christ's good name. Amen.

As we get into Habakkuk, the problem in Habakkuk is the same problem that we have today. It is the same problem that we have always had from Genesis 3:4, and that is namely sin. Sin causes all the problems. Sin comes out as rebellion, folly, suffering, injustice, death, wickedness, evil, sometimes depression, discouragement, despair. Sin is the cause and it has a wide number of effects. All of the things that we disdain about the foulness of our world come out of sin. And sin that permeates and pervades and plagues us as people and as cultures and societies from generation to generation.

Habakkuk is working in a day that is filled with sin, and the evidence of that sin is so obvious that he is filled with a great disdain. And what he sees is that sin is causing pain and suffering and injustice for people. And it's very curious because all creatures on this earth we come into life through pain of birth. We live experiencing pain and suffering and injustice. We also then give it to others. We cause others to suffer mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally. We die often times in pain. And pain and suffering is one of the great indicators that we're alive. It's the undeniable fact of our existence. And we suffer and sometimes life is arduous and sometimes life is painful and sometimes life is very hard.

And within that though it is curious as well that the only creatures that understand this are human beings. By virtue of being God's image bearers, we have reason, and so we think about the condition of the world. Other animals do not. They do not form colleges, they don't have talk radio, there is no beaver Dr. Phil (Laughter). They just sort of live and don't speculate as to the cause of the condition of their life. We, however – we have philosophy and therapy and religion and spirituality. And we have all of these various places and ways that we gather together to ponder the great question, "How come the world looks like this? How come I look like this? How come there's suffering? How come there's evil? How come there's injustice? How come there's pain? How come there's death? Why are things the way that they are, and why are they not the way that we agree that they should be?"

As image bearers, that's what we do. We think about these things a lot. Some of you more than others, but all in varying ways. And this issue of pain, suffering, evil, sin, death this is a mighty anvil upon which a multitude of philosophies and religions have been hammered out. Deists will tell ya that God is good and God made the world, but that God left and God is uninvolved, and the reason the world looks the way that it does is because God has left it. Others will conjecture and speculate like Greek mythology or works religion or also perhaps reincarnation that God exists, but God is not necessarily good. That God is capricious or mean, and that this God needs to be paid back, and you need to do something to please this God. And the reason why things look the way they do is because they are a reflection of the character of God, which is crooked and flawed.

Others are Dualists who say that God is yin and yang, God is good and bad, God is darkness and light, God is holy and evil. And the way that the world looks the way that it does is because it's a reflection of this dualist God. All right? It leads down to the place for some where they just become humanists and say, "Well, whether or not there is or is not a God, that is not the issue. The issue is that the world is crooked and flawed and that we are here, so we should fix it. We are not the problem. We are the solution." So we gather around causes and movements and the like.

And then some will go so far as to declare atheism saying, "Well, there cannot be a God. Look at the earth. If there were a God, the earth would not look like this." By virtue of pain, suffering, injustice, evil, sin and death that is incontrovertible evidence that there is no God. In the middle of it all we have Christianity, which maintains two things that are very perplexing. One is that God is good. And secondarily, that God is in ultimate control, what the theologians call sovereignty. That doesn't mean that God causes everything that is, but that he ultimately does have control. He gives a measure of freedom to people, but he is even bigger than their choices and their freedom.

And so within that, as we read in the Scriptures that God is in control ultimately and that God is good fully and then we look at the condition of our lives and our world, we're left a question, "Where is God? What is God doing? What is God's plan? How come this plan looks as it does, and God is revealed as he is?" It's very perplexing and very confusing. We hit that in Habakkuk Chapter 1. Habakkuk's struggling with this very issue. He does something that I would submit to you is a good example for us all. Habakkuk is struggling in trusting God, and he has questions for God, but he never accuses God. And I would like to delineate those two things for you.

The book is, in fact, Habakkuk questions, God answers. Habakkuk questions, God answers. And Habakkuk trusts God. That's Habakkuk Chapters 1 through 3. That's the entirety of the book. And God is big enough that when we don't understand what he is doing, it is not a sin to question what he is doing, to inquire. It is not a sin to come to God and say, "God, I know you are good, and, God, I know you are faithful, but I don't understand. This doesn't make any sense. I'm sick. I'm poor. People who don't want children have them. We who want children can't. People who don't work hard have jobs. I who work hard don't. I don't understand, God. It doesn't seem that there is justice in my life. It doesn't seem that there is justice in my world. I don't understand."

It is okay to go to God with those inquiries and questions. It is not, however, okay to accuse God. That is something different entirely. Accusing God is saying, "God, you have wronged me. God, you have sinned. God, you have erred. God, you have failed." And that is unacceptable because it then says that I am God and God is a sinner and he must seek me out for repentance. That's a reversal of the relationship. And so what Habakkuk does, he questions without accusing.

One of the saddest things I saw when I was a new Christian was a woman whose husband had died unexpectedly of a heart attack. She had two young sons. And she was in the kitchen, I think she was cooking dinner, and her two young sons were there. And she began accusing God in front of her son. "God, you have wronged me. You have killed my husband. You have left me a widow. You have left these boys an orphan. They need a father. What are you doing? I can't believe you have done this to us." She's literally shaking her finger at the sky and accusing God of being wicked and evil. And the message to these little boys was "God killed your dad", which didn't help anything.

When times are hard, to give your finger to the God who created you is not a resolution. It is not a help. It is not a comfort. It is not a solution. And questioning God can quickly slip over into accusation, so you need to be careful with your heart and your motives. But when you don't understand, it's okay to ask God. And that's what I love about Habakkuk. He doesn't run to philosophy with his questions and he doesn't run to religion. He runs to God. That's why he's a great example for us all. You have strife, you have struggles, you have questions, go to God. Pick up the Scriptures. Read, pray, ask God to reveal to you. And God is a good God. He answers Habakkuk. He'll answer you. At best, if we run elsewhere, we will get speculation, not revelation. We'll get man-made opinions. We will not get God's answers that we need to seek.

So here are Habakkuk's questions. We will look at them. In Chapter 1, beginning in Verse 1. The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet received. Here's his questions, his complaint. First question, "How long, oh, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?" First question. Many of you, I'm sure, have had it. "God, I need help. God, you said you will help. God, you said you will answer prayers. I pray for help and you don't help. How come? How come? I know you're good 'cause you say you are, and I know you hear 'cause you say you hear, and I know you can act because you have acted in the past. But how come when I pray, nothing happens? I'm crying out, God. There's injustice and sin and folly and carnage and mayhem and death, and I'm asking for you to involve yourself, and you don't. How come?"

He doesn't accuse God of being evil or malicious or wicked. He just doesn't understand. Some of you have probably felt that way. You prayed for things that you thought were in accordance with God's will, things that were good, and God did not answer those prayers. And you continued praying in faith saying, "Well, I will pray continually until the Lord hears and grants my request." And he doesn't, and it causes you to hit this point of questioning or doubt. "Is God good? Does God care? Is there God?" Habakkuk says, "How come, God? How come I keep asking and you don't answer?"

He has another question as well. "I cry out to you violence, but you do not save." Habakkuk says, "I see the wicked ruling over the vulnerable. I see the godless harming the godly. The bad guys are winning. There's violence. There's crime. There's murder. There's rape. There's mayhem. There's theft. And it's an urgent matter because people are being harmed. And I cry out in that moment, begging you to involve yourself and to stop the violence and the sin, and you don't show up. How come? How come, God? How come you don't show up? You don't save, you don't rescue, you don't play the hero. You just let it go. You keep letting it go."

He's got another question. "Why do you make me look at injustice?" Habakkuk is simply saying this: "I'm sick of it. I'm sick of it." See, many of you this is where you're at. You're sick of living on this earth. That's why the most popular Christian books today are about the rapture. That's the big question. "When do we get out of here (Laughter)? Can we leave yet? I'm so sick of it I want to leave, and I want to read a book that tells me we're gonna leave any day now, so I can just sit around and eat food that ends in -itos and watch TV (Laughter) and memorize the King James Bible and just the whole world can just go to hell in a hand basket. Me, I'm leaving. And then he's gonna consume the world with fire and I'm gonna dance. It's gonna be glorious (Laughter). I just want out of this trailer park called earth. I want to be done (Laughter)"

See, that's why some of you, too, you deal with this in denial. You're sick of it, so you live in denial. And the way you live in denial is you just pretend that the world's a good place, right? And this whole positive-thinking movement (Laughter). \_\_\_ yourself in the head with a ball-peen hammer and then tell yourself a knock-knock joke so it doesn't hurt (Laughter). Like what kind of insanity is that? Just 'cause you have good thoughts doesn't mean it's a good world. It means you're weird (Laughter). You're not living in reality. "Think good thoughts. Right. Yeah, the glass is half full." "Yeah, it's half full of dirty sewer water (Laughter). It's half – not half empty." You know.

And some of you get to the place where you just – you don't read the newspaper, you don't read magazines. This is what some Christians do. They turn into fundamentalists. Just like "Well, that's it. We're gonna go to a faraway place, and we're gonna home school, and we're gonna just get dogs and guns (Laughter), and we're just gonna – we're gonna study the New Testament and grow vegetables. And nobody is ever gonna come and talk to us. And then when Jesus comes back, he can come find us 'cause we're really far away (Laughter)." And just – it's just like "I don't want to deal with it. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of all the weirdoes, freaks, nut jobs, the whole thing."

I had one of those weeks. I'm just totally and completely sick of it. We're working on our brand new building. We had our first visitor at the new building. A guy comes in to use the bathroom. The toilets aren't in yet, so he just goes anyways (Laughter). Welcome to the neighborhood. You know, just you think "Golly." This is just all wrong. This is just not supposed to be this way. Some of you get down to the point where you're so frustrated you just stop watching TV or at least the news. Right? You can't handle it 'cause it's all mayhem and carnage and blood shed. And at the end of the nightly newscast you're sitting there just thinking, "You know, I think I'm about done. I think I'm about done. That's all I can handle."

That's why at the end of every newscast, I kid you not, watch it tonight, they always end with some story about a kitty cat and some little girl that adopted it. Like at the very end after all the carnage, then they'll say, "Be back in a minute. Wait. Don't kill yourself. We have a story about a kitty." And then they bring out this little kitty (Laughter) and see Susie adopting a kitty. The world's not all bad. And you're like "Well, I'll give it another shot tomorrow (Laughter)." That's exactly what Habakkuk said. He's just sick of it, man. He's just fed up. Right? And he's like "How come I got to look at this? How come I got to put up with this? This is terrible. This is a cesspool, and I live in it. I want to leave. I was reading the verses about heaven. I vote now (Laughter)." All right? That's where Habakkuk's at.

You can't really identify with Habakkuk until you're where he's at. Just frustrated (Laughter) and sick of it. He has one great last question at the end of Verse 3. "God, why do you tolerate wrong? God, how come you put up with this? I get sick to my stomach. I can't even look at it. I can't endure it. I can't put up with it. I'm sick of it. You're a holy and good God. I'm an unholy sinner. If an unholy sinner can't handle it and stomach it, how can a holy God possibly put up with life on this planet?" That's a good question. You ever wonder that? Man, if it makes me sick, how does God endure it? Those are his questions.

And here is the source of his exceeding frustration. He is very honest. End of Verse 3. "Destruction and violence are before me. There is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore, the law is paralyzed and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous so that justice is perverted. Not only are people messed up, cultures messed up, families messed up, systems messed up, the people that God has put in place to love, to protect, to nurture, to care, to ensure justice, to create consequence as deterrent for continued crime those people are the most wicked. The dads aren't protecting and shaping their families. They're abusing them. The police aren't enforcing the law. They're breaking it. The attorneys aren't seeking justice, just profit. The judges are not seeking justice, just power. And the elected officials are not representing the interest of their constituency, just their own selfish gain."

This is a book that is over two-and-half thousand years old, and it's amazing. It reads like today. You say, "Well, that's okay. Just appeal to the authorities and then justice will come." Do you really believe that our courts lead out justice? Do you really believe that politicians tell the truth and pursue honesty and nobility? No way. That myth is forever destroyed and vanquished. Maybe we lived under this illusion until Nixon, and then we all got a big wakeup call. And since that point, it has been nothing but "Well, this candidate stinks and this candidate stinks, but I like looking at this one more than this one, so I'll vote for this one 'cause I got to see his ugly mug every day on TV for the next four years. They're both crooked. I just want the one I can stomach looking at. And that's how we vote. It doesn't even matter the issues. It's down to haircuts (Laughter) because we've lost any expectation that there would be any sort of justice anyways, so you may as well go for the haircut.

That's the world we live in. It's just all crooked. It's all bent. It's all wrong. Even the laws are all messed up. Cohabitation rate in Seattle is 250% higher than the national average. If you get married, you get taxed an additional \$500.00. So if a young couple loves each other and gets married, it costs them more. It's a penalty. Just the whole thing is confused. It's all bent. It's all broken. It's all backward. You ever just open your eyes and look at the earth and say, "This place sucks? This is terrible. That's why I have locks on my doors. That's why I have locks on my car doors. That's why I have to sign contracts with everybody. That's why when a stranger knocks on my door, I'm fearful to answer it because outside of my dominion is nothing that chaos that frightens me."

Habakkuk says, "That's the world. It's a terrible place. I'm fed up. I'm totally sick of it. God, where are you? And, God, what are you doing?" You guys just read the newspaper this last week? A couple hundred people go into a club in Rhode Island to hear a terrible butt rock band from the '80s called Great White (Laughter). Right? If anybody needed grace, it would be a Great White fan. What happens is the band sets off fireworks indoors and 96 people die. You say, "God, how come 96 people died? They just went to a concert. Meanwhile, there's people that are selling drugs to school children who slept great last night."

In the last week as well did you track that story of the 17-year-old girl that went in for heart and lung surgery? They gave her the wrong organs with the – they gave her the wrong blood type. The organs that they gave to her didn't match her blood type, so obviously her body rejected it. This is physiology 101. And so they have to extricate, they have to take out these organs that they just put in. She has to go through another surgery. They final get organs in that match her blood type, but she dies. And you say, "God, how come? How come the gal who was 17 years old and had her whole life before her and went in for surgery, and somebody messed up and gave her the wrong blood type organs? How come? How come she dies, and there's people doing terrible and deplorable things that are gonna live long and fruitful lives? How come?"

This last week as well over in Kirkland there was a guy who claims that he was molested by his priest. Gets in his car, drives to the parking lot of the church because he can't get justice, and he kills himself in the parking lot of his own church. You say, "God, we don't know whether – you know, who's guilty, who's innocent. I don't know all the facts, but if it's true, and that seems like it probably is true 'cause that's a pretty extreme thing to do

unless you're convinced it's the reality, how come victims end up getting so depressed they kill themselves, and perpetrators sleep well and long and they have lengthy lives? How come? That doesn't seem right."

All the way down to you saw the space shuttle. People doing research, development, trying to better our quality of life. Upon reentry, explosion, death. Those are families that lost loved ones, their parents, their spouses. Meanwhile, there's drunk drivers on the road every night and they get home fine. How come? How come the drunk driver gets to go home, and the person doing research and development to improve the quality of all of our lives goes up in a ball of flames? How come? In addition, this last week there was a conviction for a woman who caused a forest fire in Colorado. I don't know if you saw this story. It's her job to spot illegal fires and put them out so that they don't cause forest fires. Her husband sends her some nasty letter. She gets up, sets it on fire and burns down 138,000 acres of the forest and burns to the ground 130 homes.

You say, "God, how come the firefighter got to burn down 130 peoples' homes?" To fight the fire and replant the trees is \$14.7 million. She got about 12 years in prison. You say, "God, you're a big God. Couldn't you have sent rain? Couldn't you have at least dumped one of those Charlie Brown clouds right over that lady (Laughter) and deluged her folly and put the fire out?" God can certainly do that, right? He flooded the earth. He can do water (Laughter), right? Not only that, there's a scam running in Seattle actually up in Lake City where two con men are ripping off Christian grandmothers. Did you read this one? They still haven't caught the guys. It's still going. One guy pretends that he's new to this country and he's got a lot of money, but he doesn't trust banks, and he wants to give his money to a charitable organization like a church or some such thing. So it's all a scam.

He finds sort of a vulnerable, gullible, older woman, some nice, sweet grandma. And what he does is he comes up to her and tells her "I really want to give this money to charity, but I don't want to put it in the bank because I don't trust banks. And she tries to convince him, "Oh, banks are good, banks are trustworthy. If you put your money in, you will get it out." He says, "Well, that's not the way it worked in my country." Then there's another guy in on the con working with this guy, pretends like he's walking by and uninvolved and says, "Oh, what are you talking about?" Enters in the conversation. And the two guys together convince the grandmother to go to the bank and withdraw a large sum of money to prove to the conman that if you put your money in the bank, you can get it out. And then they rob her.

You say, "God, how come the guys ripping off the Christian grandmothers get the money, and the Christian grandmother, how come you let her get jacked like that? That just seems – doesn't that seem – that's just wrong." By virtue of being God's image bearers with a conscience, we just go "That's wrong. That's wrong." And they're still walking the streets, maybe doing it right now. All the way down to where now we're looking at war with Iraq, Korea, terrorism, still trying to figure out what to do in Afghanistan. Everybody's marching around, "We want peace, we want peace, we want peace." Well, that's pretty much impossible when the world is filled with wicked, vile sinner because they keep hurting each other. And whether it's sticks and stones or nuclear bombs and airplanes, the human condition is still the human condition. And I'm not saying whether or not this particular war is just that we're getting into, but you look at the world and you realize it's not a safe, good place. And nobody knows what to do.

Just handing out candles and singing songs isn't going to bring peace 'cause it's really a crooked world. Can't fix things till you fix people, and all the people are crooked. You say, "Well, let's just have legislation and laws." Well, he says right here nobody will obey him and eventually the people that are supposed to enforce them they're crooked too. It's all hopeless. All the way down to Christian. Christian divorce rate higher than non-Christian divorce rate. One-third of all children that are conceived are aborted, never make it out of the womb. The statistics for Christians morally are pretty much the same as everyone else. Even God's people are just as crooked as everybody else. You go "God, I don't understand. How come? How come it looks like this? How come it works like this?"

I mean, it comes all the way down to just the stupidity and folly. And, you know, I'll give you a little comic relief now 'cause it's such an intense Sunday. You know what I did? While, I was reading the paper this week, I'll show you one of my most perplexing stories. Great Britain has found – they have a high percentage of teen pregnancy, so they've come up with a solution. What they're saying is "We don't want teenage girls to get pregnant, so we'll teach them to perform oral sex on their teenage boyfriends." That was in the Seattle Times this weekend. That's the answer.

You're just going "When in – what in the world? Is parliament nothing but 13-year-old boys these days? Did I miss the election (Laughter)? You know, that's what young ladies need. They need to view – their whole existence is to please young boys." You just go "What kinda crooked, bent –" when your teachers and your lawmakers and your educators that are – and your parents that are supposed to be in positions of power and authority to help protect you, and that's their council, you realize, like Habakkuk, "I'm just sick of it. I'm totally sick of it. I'm sick of hearing about it. I'm sick of seeing it. I'm sick of enduring it. I'm just fed up. I've had it up to here. I can't handle anymore."

And I was at the grocery store recently, and I'm passing through the checkout line. You know they have those big racks of all the magazines you can buy? I never read those magazines because I don't need 27 ways to keep your man happy. So I don't read those. I don't have a man, and I am a happy man, so I'm fine (Laughter). And I thought, "You know, I wonder what's in those crazy magazines. All this propaganda." You know, 'cause there's so much of what is being communicated that we just walk by and ignore, thinking "I don't want to know, I don't want to see, doesn't pertain to me", and just try and get our milk and eggs and go home and lock the door and sit around and live in denial. You know, we're trying to do that as easily as we possibly can.

So now I'm gonna read these magazines and just see what is being instructed to women, particularly young women. So I got Cosmo Girl, I got Glamour, I got El, I got Young Miss, I got Teen People, and I went home and read 'em all (Laughter). And it was quite an Education. So I brought some stories in for ya (Laughter). Unbelievable. My favorite – well, one of my favorites was – it was pretty hilarious – "What's the perfect guy?" And he's lanky, he can skateboard, he can play guitar. He has a little facial hair, not too much. It didn't say anything about literacy or a job (Laughter). Very shocking. Got all these great stories here, all this great wisdom and insight. You say, "Well, the world's messed up, but at least we have people with good ideas that are giving input, telling the rest of us how to help fix this trailer park we call earth."

And then I start reading 'em and I'm just thinking, "I can't – if these are the solutions –" here's one. Twenty-one things you can do that men can't get enough of. Most guys are thinking, "That sounds like a lot (Laughter)." My favorite is number 13. Number 13 says, basically, "Take good care of your cat (Laughter)." I know. Every guys like "Cat? Cats are dog food. You don't need to take care of a cat (Laughter)." Well, men don't like cats. Men like dogs. Women like cats. Dogs won't fetch, dogs won't grab a Frisbee out of the air, dogs won't hunt, they won't bark, they won't attack an intruder.

Response: Cat.

Dogs won't. Cats won't. Dogs will. I've had a long day (Laughter). I do this four times. It's like that movie Ground Hog Day. I keep waking up and it's the same day (Laughter). Here's another one. This is out of Cosmo Girl. I would stress girl. This is for young girls. "Are you sexy?" Like that's the goal. If you're 11, that's your goal. "I want to be sexy." You think – everything I read was just how to make young boys happy. I thought, "What a perverted sense of identity. You exist to glorify God, to be his daughter. Not to keep Johnny happy." Right (Laughter)? Johnny's – he's a 13-year-old boy. You're never gonna make him happy. If you do, you have to violate all the commandments (Laughter).

Here's another one sex education. "Well, people are having sex. We need to educate them." Yeah. Get married. It works every time (Laughter). Here's the issue. They say, "Well, we hate sex ed. because it's taught by an elderly nurse and a happily married gynecologist." Heaven forbid that sex would be talked about by happily married people. They say the answer is that peers should teach sex education. So if you're 13, you get sex ed. from a 13-year-old because they know exactly what it's like to be retarded. They don't know what they're talking about (Laughter). "The married lady she doesn't know what she's talking about. She'll say, 'Oh, get married and be faithful', that kinda crazy stuff, you know. We read this British report and we have another idea(Laughter)." I mean, you just – speaking of British reports, here's a feature on Christina Aguilera. And it lifts her up as a model for young women and how great it is to be naked and liberated.

Like, I mean, yeah, my daughter is five, and if she comes home and says, "Well, it was down to the Virgin Mary or Christina Aguilera", I'm gonna have to give myself CPR. I mean, it's just – you know, it's just any – I mean, her whole thing is – what's the name of her latest album?

Response: Dirty.

Dirty. That's not right (Laughter). That's not right. That's just wrong. Here's another one. There's a counselor here, gives advice to young girls. This one's about sex. "All my friends lost their virginity at a young age. What is a healthy age for me to start having sex?" She says, "A healthy age being smart enough about your health and emotional maturity. It's more about listening to their inner voice." I don't even know what that means (Laughter). I have an inner voice that says, "Give me a ham sandwich and leave me alone (Laughter)." That's what my inner voice says. I do not get deep, profound insight from my inner voice (Laughter).

This one's good. If you don't know if you're compatible with a guy, no problem. You can do palm reading. Sure fire way to make sure you're compatible. And so it teaches you how to do palm reading. "Well, I don't know if we should date. Let me see your hand (Laughter). Oh, look at that. You have a problem with commitment. That's a short line." What in the – "I can't be a Christian. I don't have that much faith." What the – and every one that I saw had the horoscopes for the guy and the girl, so the young lady can figure out her horoscope and correspond it to her boyfriend's (Laughter). And it includes tremendous insight like this month if you are an Aquarius, you should go ahead and listen to unusual music and go to movies and read books (Laughter). Yeah.

"Oh, tremendous enlightenment. I'm 14. That would have never happened. Next month I will talk on the phone (Laughter)." Shocking revelation. You know, and just you just look at that and you go "I'm not on the far fringes." This is the line at the grocery store. Okay? I just went through the grocery store line. And it was very embarrassing 'cause I had this long line of magazines and the checkout lady's looking at me like "Cosmo Girl? What kind of pervert (Laughter) –" "It's just research. I'm a pastor. Just put in the bag", you know (Laughter). You know, but you just – do you ever just get sick of it, just frustrated like the world is messed up and the people that are giving the advice and trying to fix it they're so – it's just so backwards and confused and wrong, and it's just troubling to where you just get so sick of it.

Okay. The last two are more insidious and more sickening. This one is from El Magazine. It's about a young – it's about an older woman. When she was a young girl, her mother got remarried. Her stepfather sexually molested her beginning at age like 11 or 12. And she writes this long article on how it was a great thing because it liberated her from traditional social \_\_\_ and it opened her up, and she wasn't a victim. She really enjoyed it. And not all young women that get molested are victims. It can be a really good thing. You just go "I can't even fathom." One of our three women statistically in this generation that I'm a part of has been sexually abused in some way. And to write an article saying, "And it was a good thing", you just go "How far gone are we? How bankrupt is it? Is this really what women need to hear that 'It was a good thing, have a positive spin on it'? Your dad. Your dad." This guy adopted her. He was her father. And she says, "You know, it was good for me."

You just go "How sick, how bent, how crooked can you possibly get?" I'm a father. I have a five-year-old daughter. I couldn't even read the whole article 'cause I physically was gonna throw up on it. I'm just thinking, "I can't even fathom a world where when a guy takes the love and trust and intimacy that his daughter has for him and turns that into sexuality, even conceiving of justifying that and making that a good thing." You know, it's just carnage. And so some people then argue for a spiritual answer. I picked up Miss Magazine. They say, "You know what? We need spirituality." What they say is "We need a feminine spirituality." This whole article is why women all need to become witches. Because Wicca is a fast-growing religion in this country. The military's actually just recognized it as an official religion. You can be a Wiccan chaplain.

"We need spirituality. We need goddesses, we need witchcraft, we need Wicca. That's the hope." And you just go "Man." What I'm trying to do, a little levity, and a little sobriety, just get you to the place where you're sitting with Habakkuk going "Okay. I'm sick of it. I'm just sick of it. His questions

for God are my questions too. Okay, God. What are you doing, and how come you put up with this? Why in the world would you tolerate this? Why would you put up with this?" And once you hit that point of absolute frustration, then you can identify with this great book. Habakkuk's not a perfect guy, but he's a guy who loves God. He walks around with his eyes open, and he's just sick of it. Okay? Some of you are there. Some of you will be soon.

Let's look at God's answer beginning in 1:5 of Habakkuk. Here's all his questions. Here's God's answer. Some of you say, "Man. I wish God would tell me what he's doing." No, you don't. No, you don't. You're gonna hear Habakkuk's answer and you're gonna struggle with it mightily. God says this: "Look at the nations and watch", Verse 5, "and be utterly amazed for I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe even if you were told." Habakkuk says, "God, do something." God says to Habakkuk "I will. I will. I will." Habakkuk says, "God, are you sick of it?" God says, "Yep. I'm sick of it. I'm at the end of my tether. The patience and the grace is gone. Habakkuk, you think you're frustrated? You should be as holy as me and realize that every offense that sickens you is against me." Holy and righteous God. Here's his plan: "I am raising up", Verse 6, "the Babylonians." Are those the good guys or the bad guys? Those are the bad guys. Right?

When the Rolling Stones name an album after your country, it's a bad country (Laughter). Okay? This is the Babylonians. The Babylonians are a fearsome people. They are a godless people. He says here that "They are a ruthless and impetuous people who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own." This is the preeminent military force in the world of that day. See, God's people have been ignoring God, they have been ignoring the law, they have been a law unto themselves and doing whatever they please. God says, "You know what? If that's what you want, then I'm gonna let you meet the Babylonians because they have taken that logic to its inevitable conclusion."

If they want your house, they kill you and they take it. If your family complains, they kill them. If your neighbors bring it to the court, they kill the neighbors and the judge and the attorney. If they want your town, they kill you all, they take the town. They want your wife, they kill you, they take your wife, your house and your town. They want your nation, they slaughter everyone and they take the nation. They go wherever they want. They do whatever they want. Law only has jurisdiction if it can be enforced. And if I'm stronger than you, law is nothing. I am my own law. I am my own God. I rule as sovereign. Wherever I go and wherever I put my foot, that is my dominion. Those are the Babylonians.

God says, "I'm sending them after you." Verse 7, "They are a feared and a dreaded people. They are a law unto themselves and promote their own honor. Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops along, and their horsemen come from afar." People would read this and say, "Well, that's okay. We'll just run for our lives. We'll flee." No, you won't. You're on foot, they're on horse, and their horses are well trained and they come with chariots. You cannot fight an army on horseback or in chariot if you are a peasant on foot. You are dead. It is over. You guys saw the movie the Lord of the Rings? These are the guys they make in the middle of the earth. Okay? That's who these guys are. You are not going to win. And when they show up sword in hand, running in mass as an army on horseback, followed with chariots filled with armaments, it is not going to go well for the wicked little peasants who just defy God and mock his kindness and his protection.

"They fly like a vulture, swooping to devour. They all come bent on violence." With these people there is no negotiation. There is no compromise. There is no mediatorship. There is no middle ground. They come in and kill you. They do not discuss terms of surrender. They do not discuss terms of peace. They understand that peace comes by killing your enemies, and when all their enemies are dead, then they have peace. And so they just slaughter you, and then they rule. They don't negotiate a thing. "Their hoards advance like a desert wind. They come quick and sudden and hot, melting everything in their path. And they gather prisoners like sand." "Well, they can't get us all." Yes, they can. This is what they do for a living. They capture everyone, and they slaughter everyone. That is what they do. You say, "Well, that's okay. We've got a king. We've got police. We've got a military." Right?

For us we have this false sense of security. "But we have nuclear subs off of shore. We have military bases nearby. We have National Guard troops. We have airstrips. We have protection." It says, "These guys deride kings and scoff at rulers." They show up and the buck private laughs at the king because he knows that by days end he will have run him through the sword and he's as good as dead. Your king doesn't matter. Your army doesn't matter. Your breastplate is worthless. Any confidence you had in your strength, any confidence you had in your military, any confidence you had in your king, any confidence you had in your kingdom, as soon as you see these guys, you know that you have had a misplaced faith.

"They laugh at all fortified cities, and they build earthen ramps to capture them." In that day the great protection and sense of security came from having a fortified wall around your town. "They can't get in here. We're protected." Again, this reads like Lord of the Rings. All right? Big fortified city, big wall around the town. We're safe in here. He says, "No. Not only will these guys show up, they'll show up with ramps that will enable them to enter into your city, and they'll slaughter you in your own walls." All of a sudden those walls are not a protection. They're a prison. You can't run because they have you cornered. It's like locking the doors to your own home from the outside and then someone gets in and you're cornered. Any way you would anticipate to defend yourself or protect yourself, they already have a plan to overcome that.

Verse 11 promises this: "Then they will sweep past like the wind and go on." Guilty men whose own strength is their what? God. It's like many young men in this room. You're young, you're strong, and you're your own God. You trust in your own insight and your own strength and your own ability and your own capability. You trust in yourself because you are young and strong. And this false sense of security comes upon your youthfulness. That's these guys. Young, dumb, strong. Very bad combination. Young, dumb, strong. These are not guys that you reason with because they're not that smart. And these are not guys you beat because they are that strong. And these are not guys you can outlast because they're young. That's God's plan. God's plan is justice.

Habakkuk says, "I'm sick of it. Would you do something?" God says, "I'm sick of it too. How about justice?" Do we like God's answer? No. Well, you guys all wanted God to do something just a minute ago. You were all just like Habakkuk. "Come on, God, show up. Do something." God says, "Fine. I'm the king of kings, Lord of Lords. I'll show up, unveil my glory, bring about justice." We say, "No, no, no, no, no. We don't like justice. We

just want things to be fixed, not dealt with (Laughter). We want things to be better, but we don't want anyone to have to pay for their wrongdoing. Can't you just say a magic word or wave a wand like a fairy? Couldn't you do something like that? Do you have to be such a strong, mighty, kingly good God? Couldn't you be just the sky fairy who shows up and dispenses advice like a talk show host and encourages people to change their course of action? Isn't there another way?" "No."

The reason we resist God's justice is because we know that we're all guilty as well. All sinned, all falling short, all crooked, all giving God the finger that he made, all doing exactly what we want, thinking that we're wise in our own eyes. And just like the junk I read, thinking that we're the solution and not the problem. And so when we hear that, we say, "Well, God, you can't do that to them. They're like me, and I'm one of the good guys." And God says, "You know what? There's one good guy. His name's Jesus. The rest of you are just varying degrees of problems." Is God going to do evil here? No. The Babylonians want to attack. God has held them back by his hand. And he has done this for a long season, waiting for his people to repent. He has sent Jeremiah the prophet who is screaming and crying and begging, "Stop sinning. The wage for sin is death. You're ruining creation. You're ruining your nation. You're ruining yourself. Stop sinning. Trust me."

And God has held back this deluge. It's almost like a dam on a river. And the longer God waits, the more wicked they become. They mock his patience. They mock his kindness. And they live under two illusions that you and I have a habitual tendency to live under. One is that time covers sin. Some of you think that because something was done a while ago, it's now done with. That's where you hear people say, "Well, you know, I used to be like this or I used to do this", and then they laugh and joke about it as if it's all better now because it's been a while. Some of you it's last week. "Well, I did that, but that was last week. Monday you hit control, alt, delete and you get a whole new start (Laughter)." No, you don't. Time doesn't fix anything. Time doesn't heal all wounds.

The other myth that they were laboring under was this: There's safety in numbers. "We all do it, the whole lot of us is guilty. It must not be that bad because God hasn't done anything, and we're all doing it. It's not like he's gonna get us all (Laughter)." Yes, he will, and he does. That illusion of time and safety in numbers I think that's what was driving these people. That's what drives many of you. Here's my question: When do you think God will be sick of you? When do you think God will, like Habakkuk, just throw his hands in the air and say, "I'm done. I'm done. I begged, I pleaded, I waited, I was patient, I protected and now I'm lifting my hand. Let it run its course." I do not know when that day is for you, but there is a day. There is most certainly a day, a final and complete justice. Either Jesus comes back, and many think he won't because they live under that illusion of time, it's been a while, or we will die. And many of us live under the illusion of time, that we've been alive this far, we'll be alive indefinitely.

And if there's safety in numbers, everybody else is just as bad as me, everybody else is just as bad as you, true, and you're all in trouble. Habakkuk is sick of it before God is. Isn't that curious? What does that tell you about God? God is a very patient God. God has his hand back, and occasionally he lets suffering or evil or pain through to wake us up. C.S. Lewis says, "It's God's megaphone to the earth." The wage for sin is death. Folly, rebellion, sin has consequences. When you taste that, when you touch that, when you experience that, when you get your own scar, you want redemption. You want God. You want God to show up and to take it away. And God does that so we would desire him. But at some point he gets as sick of it as we do. And he gets as sick of us as we get sick of each other. But here's the beauty of God. God had sent Jeremiah at the same time to be crying and screaming and calling out "Recognize your sin. Turn to me. Trust me."

God today cries out to us all through his Word and through the preachers of his Word to come to repentance and faith in him, to not have our strength be our own God or our spirituality or our morality be our own God. Not to live under the myth that we're going to live forever and that nothing will ever be dealt with because it hasn't yet, and that there's safety in numbers, that we're all crooked, so we're all fine. And Peter picks up this theme. He says that "God is not slow, as some of you would reckon him slow. God is instead patient." See, we're like Habakkuk. If you become a Christian, you want to be done right there. Justice. Deal with it. Get it over with.

What God is saying is "Now, wait a second. There are a large number of people that I intend to save. There are a large number of people that I intend to love and forgive. And there are a large number of people that I intend to heal and redeem. And just because you're sick of it doesn't mean we can stop just yet because further down the continuum of history, there's someone else that I'm still looking for. And I've had –" I can almost hear God saying, "I've had thousand of years where everyone was asking me to get it over with, but had I obeyed any of those requests, then I would not have gotten to you. And so it is better for you to be frustrated and sick of it for a while until we get the whole family together at the end. And in the meantime, you're going to need to teach about me" because there is no hope under the sun, there is no hope apart from God. And our frustration should be an incentive for us to do something, realizing that we can't do anything, but we can point to God, and we can compel people toward him. And we can give meaning to their suffering and their pain and their injustice.

And here's the curious fact. You and I hate injustice, we hate suffering, we hate pain, and it's because we weren't built for it. If all evolutionary biology was true, if we were nothing but glorified animals, then we would not think about it and it would not trouble us and we would long for nothing else. But the fact of the matter remains. We cannot accept ourselves as we are, we cannot accept the world as it is because we were not created in this state for this place. And here's your Bible. Your Bible starts with two chapters of creation and perfection and joy. Naked, happy, eating fruit. The place we wish we all were. Genesis 3, sin, judgment. Genesis 4, death. The first two chapters creation and perfection. The third chapter judgment. The rest of your Bible longing and anticipation for the very patient God who promises he's coming and promises that he's coming again. Thousands of years patience because there is a long line of people that he desires to save and love.

Your Bible ends with the Book of Revelation. The last two chapters are a replica of the first two chapter. Recreation, perfection and joy, including the Tree of Life taken out of the garden again. The third chapter in is judgment. The third to the last chapter in is also judgment. It's justice. Perfection, justice, patient God, final justice, perfection again. We call that heaven. No sin, no sickness, no death, no folly. No false gods. No wars. What Habakkuk

really wants, he wants heaven. What we really want, we want heaven. And the only way into heaven is through the door of justice. But if God were just to wink and tolerate sin, then heaven would be hell, and there would be no hope because nothing would change. And so God, in his great mercy – and I'll tell ya about Jesus, and this is why we love him so much.

God not only looks at our condition and gets sick of it, he actually comes into it. He takes upon human flesh. God becomes a man, Jesus. Of all the places that God would be least likely to go, in the mess that we have created, that would be the least likely. You think you're fed up? Can you imagine being God and living here? God comes. He's tempted in every way we are, yet without sin. He is mocked, he is beaten, he is scourged, he is scorned, he is lied to. He is betrayed by a friend. The courts that are supposed to bring justice run him through a series of false trials. The friend who's supposed to sit by his side betrays him for 30 pieces of silver. His leader of the men, Peter, denies him to a young girl. It's total pandemonium and chaos and mayhem. Everybody's crooked. Jesus is the only one who keeps it straight.

And he goes to the cross and on the cross, Second Corinthians 5:21 says "God made him who knew no sin to become sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." If you don't like justice, you have no need for Jesus. You get rid of Jesus, you get rid of salvation. You get rid of Christ. Jesus dies for all my sins past, present and future. He rises to conquer enemies of sin and death. He gives me life, new life. And I have this foretaste and this appetite for the things of God and not the things of Satan, for life, not for death, for holiness, not for rebellion. And God begins to cause me to hunger and thirst for righteousness so that, like Habakkuk, I'm frustrated and sick of it. And Jesus makes a promise that "Blessed are you when you hunger and thirst for that righteousness because a day is coming when you will be filled."

I'll close from these words from the Apostle Paul in Romans 8. Then I'll call you to response, repentance of sin, trust in Christ. If you're not a Christian, my question to you is this: When will God get sick of you? It would be good for you to do business with him today. For those of you that are Christians, he may still be sick of you, and today would be a good day for you to do business with him as well. We call that repentance. Here's my sin. Thank you, Jesus. Forgive me. Cleanse me. Give me grace to stop being who I naturally am inclined to be. We'll take communion, which is remembering Jesus' body and blood. We'll take our offering so we give of our offering and we receive of communion. Baskets are up front, basket in the back. You can send it in during the week. I'll close with these words from the Apostle Paul in Romans 8.

He says, beginning in Verse 18, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." That's when we rise from the dead and live forever in the presence of God. "The creation, the whole earth waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed, for the creation was subjected to frustration", that is consequently why it is frustrating, "not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and be brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning, yearning, waiting, frustrated, as in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time. Not only so, but we ourselves who have the first fruits from the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is no hope at all." Here's a great word for us today. "Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it" how? "Patiently."

"In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

Lord God, we thank you so much that you've sent the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. That we, like Habakkuk, can get very frustrated and sick of it. Sick of the condition of the world, sick of our own personal condition. We thank you as well, Lord God, that that is not all. That you have already sent Jesus to die for our sins and to rise in triumphant victory so that we need not pay the penalty of justice. God, please keep us from the delusion that simply because we don't experience instantaneous justice for our sin that somehow justice has not been met. We thank you that it was met in Christ.

And, God, I plead for those who do not trust in Christ. That, God, you would spare them from that day when they would have to pay for their own sin, when they would need to taste your own justice as Jesus did for all of your people. God, I pray that we would heed the words of Jeremiah who preached at the time of Habakkuk that we would turn from sin and folly and death, and we would put our faith in you, the living God. God, it's my prayer for us all that as we, like Habakkuk, grow sick and weary, that we get frustrated and we're fed up and tired of it all, that we would realize that you are not a slow God and you are not an absent God. That you are an amazingly passionate God, and you have waited even 2,600 years since the author in Habakkuk to bring this word to us. You have been waiting and waiting for your people. We thank you for your patience as we are numbered among them.

And, God, as it says here, we eagerly anticipate what you have for us. Please give us patience to wait till that day. And, God, please cause us to persevere by grace together. We love you, Lord Jesus. Thank you. Amen.