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Don't Waste Your Waiting

March 10, 2024
Series: When in Doubt
Habakkuk 2

BIG IDEA - WE CAN'T CONTROL OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT WE CAN CONTROL HOW WE WAIT AND WHO WE WAIT WITH

Good morning, Two Cities Church. How's everyone doing? Let me tell you, if you're new or you've been around for a while, what we are trying to do here. Let me say it this way. We're not just trying to draw a crowd; we're trying to build a church. There's a difference.

It's actually fairly easy to draw a crowd. You need some good teaching, maybe some good music...I don't know...every once in a while something provocative, you know, a good social media account, a decent website, and you can draw a crowd. We're trying to do something different than draw a crowd. That's about entertaining people.

We are trying to, by the grace of God, build a church. That means investing, and that means making sure people are edified and equipped. Why am I telling you this? Because, basically, the main reason we do the Weekender is to help people move from the crowd to the church, from the crowd to the connected and the committed.

We had another Weekender this weekend. Let me show you some pictures. We had almost 150 people there. It was an incredible experience. We're excited about it. It deepens our groups. It strengthens our serving teams. It encourages our staff. We have another Weekender coming up on April 19 and 20. We say this all the time, but if you're new, the Weekender is for you.

In fact, in April, as well, we're going to be launching 10 brand-new Community Groups. One of the things we're learning in this Habakkuk series is we really need each other, that we're both needy and needed. So, I hope you'll consider going through our Weekender so you can get in a group.

The final thing before I pray and we start is we have Easter coming up three weeks from today. We're just trying to make room. That's why I'm telling you now. We're going to have a Thursday night service. Here's one of the reasons we do that. Some of you travel for Easter. We wanted you to be able to be here and worship with your church family before you headed out.

We also are expecting... This is the one time a year outside of Christmas when people who otherwise wouldn't go to church will try a church. So, let me encourage you. If you've made the deposits relationally with somebody who's far from God and close to you, or maybe somebody who's close to you and close to God but far from church, for some reason, this might be a great time, if you've made the deposits, to make a withdrawal and invite somebody to be a part of this Easter. With that said, let's pray, and then we'll dive into Habakkuk.

Lord, we just want to pray right now for churches all across our city that are going to be having Easter services, whether it's Calvary Baptist or Salem Chapel or Salem Presbyterian or Redemption Hill or Emmanuel. There are all of these churches, and Easter is a unique opportunity to preach the gospel, to celebrate the resurrection, and to have people who otherwise wouldn't go to church come to church.

Lord, we thank you that we still have a little bit of a cultural moment at Easter, that our culture is haunted enough by its Christian past to be open to Easter and attending a service. Help us to be found faithful teaching your Word and having that "Come and see" mentality. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

I don't know about you guys, but I hate to wait. I bet you hate to wait as well. We're not really good at waiting, and we really don't like waiting. Mostly it's our fault, but it's also the fault of our culture. We live in the age of Amazon. Does anyone else have this experience now?

You know, two-day delivery. We expect that, but Amazon kind of tempts you. Do you ever check out, and when you're checking out and are about to pay it says, "If you order this in the next 14 minutes and 12 seconds, you can get this tomorrow"? Well, yeah, I wouldn't want to wait an extra day.

We live in the age of Amazon. We live in a time where we get to have everything right now. Some of you have never had the experience of going to Blockbuster and Hollywood Video. Do you remember this? We used to have to wait for a movie to come out, and then we'd have to wait to see if it was there. Now we can stream something right away. We never have to wait.

In fact, they say there are only three places you still have to wait. First, the doctor's office. Some of you are doctors. Explain this to us. The average person still, even though they show up on time, has to wait 32 minutes to see a doctor. Another place is the airport. Anyone else TSA PreCheck? It doesn't even make a difference. The TSA PreCheck line is longer than the regular line!

They say the average person will wait 28 minutes at the airport. That's getting their shuttle. That's waiting in line. That's a delayed flight. That's TSA. The third place you're most likely to wait is for your significant other to get ready to go out. All of the men said, "Amen." The average time there is 21 minutes.

It's fun to laugh about that kind of stuff, but there are also seasons of waiting. If you'll turn to Habakkuk, chapter 2, he's in a season of waiting. Sometimes you are waiting... If you're a middle schooler or high schooler, you're waiting to graduate and go to college. If you're in college, you're waiting to get into the real world.

If you're single, you're waiting for him to ask you. You're waiting to get married. You're waiting to have kids. If you have kids in the home, you're waiting for them to leave. You're waiting for your career to take off. Then, all of a sudden, one day you wake up and you're waiting for your career to end so you can enjoy some of your youth that's left during retirement. We're always in a season of waiting.

They say Americans are particularly bad at waiting because we have something one commentator called *hurry sickness*. It was an interesting article. It basically said that what happened is we used to... I can think about this with my parents' generation. We used to work for the weekend. "All right. It's going to be crazy Monday through Friday, but we're going to work for the weekend."

They say now, because we all have side hustles and second jobs and the increase of activities of academics and athletics and all that kind of stuff, we don't even work for the weekends anymore. One of the reasons... Why is everyone so obsessed with their vacation? Why are people spending more money than they've ever spent on their vacation? Because it's the only time they ever get a break.

Guys, you can't walk with God in a hurry. Could you imagine? "All right. Repent of sin. Do it in a hurry. Become like Christ in a hurry. Intercede for your kids in a hurry. Walk deeply in Christian community, and do it in a hurry." It's silly. You can't. So, here's what I want us to do. Today, I want us to learn from Habakkuk what it looks like to wait. Last week (and they're all mingled together) we saw him wrestle; this week we see him wait.

If you'll turn to chapter 2, we're going to look at this whole chapter, and we're going to watch him. Verse 1: **"I will take my stand..."** Remember, he was just wrestling with God. **"...at my watchpost..."** "I'm going to watch, and I'm going to wait." **"...and station myself..."** That's strong language. "I'm going to stand here, and I'm going to station myself."

"...on the tower..." We'll get here, but sometimes you have to get up on the highest thing you can to go, "I've got to get as high as I can to see as far as I can." He's looking for perspective. **"...and look out to see what he will say to me..."** "I want God to speak to me in this situation while I wait." **"...and what I will answer concerning my complaint."**

Here's what happens. If you're new and weren't here last week and you're not familiar with this book, Habakkuk, it's kind of a strange, small book. It's an interesting little book at the end of your Old Testament. It's a Minor Prophet, and in it, this prophet (we saw it last week) is crying out to God for a very specific reason. This is going to happen in your life. It already has happened in your life at some point.

Here's what's going to happen, and this is where you're going to have to wait or when you're going to have to wrestle, when you're going to have to have faith (we'll get there): when God's Word doesn't seem to be matching up with what's happening in your world. We were there last week. It's all of those things like, "God, you say *this*, but this is what I'm experiencing."

"God, you say you're committed to life, but I'm infertile." There it is. It's like, "Hold on. Your Word and my world aren't matching." Sometimes it's like this. God's revelation, which is his written Word, and your lived reality... There's a gap. You're dying of cancer, and it's like, "God, how about all of those verses about how you love me and have a good plan for my life? I feel the gap here."

I want us to learn today from Habakkuk, because I don't want you to waste your waiting. It is possible to waste your waiting. It's possible to, in your waiting, continually say, "How can I get out of this?" instead of saying, "How much could I get out of this in this season?"

Here's the thing about waiting. We see from Habakkuk when you're waiting... I'm going to try to give us some helpful principles today. When you're waiting, here's the first thing you do: you control what you can control, obviously. If you've ever been through a lot of suffering, you're like, "Oh my goodness." The first thing you'll realize is "I can't control this."

"I can't control what my husband is going to do when I say that. I can't control if the chemotherapy is going to work." Yeah. There's a lot more than *that* you can't control, believe me. So, what you do is... This is a great rule in suffering. What do I do? Well, I figure out what I *can* control, and I control that.

Here's what you can control when you're waiting: you can control how you wait. You don't have to walk away from God; you can walk with God. Here's another thing you can control. This is really cool. You can control this while you wait. You can control who you wait with. If you wait alone, your waiting will be worse, obviously.

Sometimes people wait with the wrong people. Do you remember Job's wife? Poor Job. He's suffering, and his wife is like, "Curse God and die!" It's like, "I don't want to wait with *you*." We can decide how we're going to wait. We can decide who we're going to wait with.

We can decide, in some way, who we're going to become when we wait. Are you going to become bitter or are you going to become better? *Waiting* is a euphemism for suffering. That's what waiting is. When you're waiting, your idols will be exposed. You'll have to see, "Are my desires, which are often good, going to become demands?"

So, let me show you this. I want us to look at a couple of principles. Let's go back to that first verse. There are a couple of really helpful principles in here about waiting that I don't want us to miss. Let's read it one more time. ***"I will take my stand at my watchpost 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."***

Here's the first principle: *when you are waiting, don't wander*. Notice the first thing. He's like, "I'm wrestling with God, and I don't know what's going to happen, but I need to stay put." The temptation when you are suffering or when you are waiting is to drift and get distracted. And it looks different. You have to know your temptations. You have to know your proclivities.

Part of what happens when you're waiting is you get bored. I promise you there is nothing more dangerous than a bored man. Stay away from him. He gets himself in all types of trouble. Some people are waiting, so they amuse themselves. You know, watch all five seasons of *Breaking Bad* again. Some people numb it. There are a lot of different ways to numb it...some version of self-medicating.

For some people, they're waiting, and it's too painful to be conscious, so they go to bed earlier and wake up later and nap more. It's interesting. If we could leave Habakkuk for a second and look at the whole Old Testament, which Habakkuk is a

part of, we get all of these interesting examples of people who had to wait. I could just... I'm not going to the whole time, but we could just talk about it.

Do you want to talk about Joseph? He had to wait. We talked about that a couple of years ago in a series we had. Yeah, Joseph had to wait a long time. He was in prison too, and he was in a pit. Oh yeah. Forget about him for a second. How about Moses? Yeah, Moses had to wait. He's a shepherd by himself for 40 years, waiting for the call of God. Oh, and then there's Abraham.

Abraham may be the most famous story of waiting in the Bible. We'll get back to Habakkuk in a minute. Let's talk about Abraham. If you don't know who Abraham is, Abraham is the ultimate "failure to launch" story. He's 70 or 75 years old. He's still living in his mom's basement. Basically, God comes to him and says, "I want you to have an adventure, and I want to use you in the life of other people."

Actually, specifically, he says, "From you, Abraham, a great nation is going to come, but you're going to have to wait." Abraham basically says, "God, that's cool. I mean, you're God and I'm not, so I'm cool with that, but here's just one problem with me being a great nation. I have zero kids right now...zero. The other problem... This is kind of embarrassing, but my wife and I can't get pregnant. We're also really old now, so we *really* can't get pregnant anymore."

God says, "Well, don't worry about that. I promise I'm going to... Just wait." That's what God says to him. We can't give him too hard of a time, because... If you ever read the story, it happens in a chapter, but it took 10 years. Ten years later... This is such a strange story. It's true, but it's so strange.

Sarah, Abraham's wife... It has been 10 years, and God hasn't answered the promise yet, so Sarah says to Abraham, "Hey, listen. I've got an idea. God wants us to have a kid. It's not working. I've got this young lady who works for me. She's my servant girl. Her name is Hagar. What if you slept with her, and then she has a kid, and then that'll be *your* kid, and that'll be how God does things."

All of us are like, "This is like the first episode of a bad Netflix show." Right? This is like, "No!" But he does it, and he creates an Ishmael. I'm telling you this for a reason. When you're waiting, the temptation is to create an Ishmael. Let me explain what an Ishmael is. An Ishmael is when I try to accomplish God's will but not in God's way.

It happens. The most classic example is "I know God wants me to be married. He says marriage is a good thing, and I know it's God's will for me to marry somebody who also is a believer, but I can't find him or her right now, so let me just look for somebody who believes in God." Here's the thing about creating an Ishmael: an

Ishmael complicates your life for the rest of your life. That's by definition what Ishmael did. See, sin complicates the already complex.

So, we're told, "Wait." Look at this. If you go back to verse 1, it says he climbs up on the tower and looks out. This is what's called *watchful waiting*, which I actually found out this week is a medical term. Some of you are in medicine. You'll correct me afterward, but I think this is what it meant as I was reading it.

When you do watchful waiting, the doctor basically says, "I'm not sure what this is." You go to the doctor. "I've got this lump." "Well, I'm not sure what that is, and *you're* not sure what that is, and I don't know if I treat that it'll get any better or might get worse, so let's watch together." It's like a recommitment to be very attentive to what's going on to see what is best to do next.

So, he climbs up on this tower, which is interesting. I know this is easier for some people than others. It's the idea of perspective. When you're waiting on God, when you're suffering (again, those are similar things), sometimes you need to get away. I don't mean you have to get on some airplane and fly somewhere and stay at some five-star hotel.

I mean you may have to go to Tanglewood Park for three hours by yourself or you may need to tell your wife or your husband, "I need to go up to Pilot Mountain for the day. I'll be back by dinner." A classic business thing they'll tell businesspeople is... Like, if a guy starts his business and he's overwhelmed, they'll say something like, "Do you know what the problem with your business is? You're working *in* it and not working *on* it."

If you're a business guy and have never heard that before, you're like, "Dude, that is so profound. Okay. You're right. I'm an employee. I need to get over. I need to be the boss and the owner." Great. From a Christian perspective, it's not just that we need to work *on* it not *in* it; it's we need to get *above* it. We need to say, "God, I really want you to speak to me."

By the way, we have to... I'm speaking particularly because we have a lot of these families. If you're a young family and have young kids, each spouse has to value the spiritual health of the other spouse and occasionally let them get away. I'm talking about a couple of hours, maybe a day, so they can hear from God.

There have been so many times in my life I've needed to do this. (I won't make this about me.) I've needed an answer from God. I remember when I was 30... I'm 39 now, so almost a decade ago, I was wrestling with whether or not to go into full-time ministry or go into business with my dad, and I was waiting on God to answer. I asked

my boss at the time, "Hey, can I have two or three days? I need to hear from God about this."

So, he says he climbs up, and he wants to get perspective. Now, when you want to get perspective on your life, there are at least two things you can think that will be helpful. These really do work. The first one is "Things could be worse," and the second one is "Things will one day be better."

"Things could be worse" shouldn't lead you to compare your life to somebody else's life who's worse than you so you feel better about you. It's a way to put on the glasses of grace, look at your life, and go, "I want to be..." Here's the principle. This works. I've actually walked with people through an enormous amount of suffering, so I know these things work. This works.

What could you be grateful for despite your suffering? After last service, some guy I've never seen before walked up to me. He said, "Thank you for your message." I said, "Thank *you*. What's going on, man? How did you hear about our church?" He said, "My wife died a year ago." He's young. He's like my age. I was like, "Oh my." He was like, "I'm so grateful that I still have my two boys." He had his two boys with him.

What could you be thankful for? What's the other option? Be bitter and resentful and angry at everything? You know, "Oh man. This is so horrible that I have to go get chemotherapy. At least my marriage is strong. At least I have someone to drive me here. It could be worse."

The second one is "It will be better," but (we'll get here at the end) not always in this life. One of the hard things is it might not be until heaven. Now, we want to hope for here. I'll give you some big words for a second. We don't want to have an under-realized eschatology or an over-realized eschatology.

An over-realized eschatology expects too much of heaven here. We're not there yet. But an underrealized eschatology doesn't expect enough of heaven here. It's like, "No, God heals, and God saves. I've read the book of Acts, and I believe God still moves."

So, we have to get perspective, and then we need vision. Let me show you this. This is neat. The next thing we need is vision, which is maybe not what you'd think you need to tell somebody who's waiting in suffering, but it is what they need. Look. This is verse 2. ***"And the LORD answered me: 'Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.'"***

When you're suffering, you can't see anything. Proverbially or symbolically or spiritually, you're in the wilderness. You're like, "Where am I?" That's the first thing that happens in people's lives. They're like, "I don't know what to do. I don't know what's next."

I keep using this similar example because cancer is such a good one. You know, you have cancer. You don't know how long you'll be married then. You don't know anything. You don't know if you're going to walk your daughter down the aisle. You don't know any of that. You need a vision for this moment right now.

So, he says you need a vision from God's Word. Then he says it needs to be two things. I'm hoping that maybe... I'm trying to explain a little bit what I try to do up here. He says you need a vision. It's obviously from God's Word, and it needs to be two things. Do you see that? He says, "Make it plain."

It's not that Habakkuk had bad handwriting. That's not what that's about. Listen. And you know this. When people are suffering, they need the simplest version of something. It's like, "I don't have time to read your 800-page book on suffering. I don't need your 15 reasons this happened. Please, no." You need something very simple.

The other thing he says is you need something portable. He says, "When people are suffering and waiting, I need you to give them the simplest version of my Word that they can run with." That's because the worst thing you could do when you're suffering is just do nothing.

Years ago, at Houston airport (it's one of the biggest airports in the United States)... This is really interesting. It tells us something about human psychology. They were finding all of these complaints (I told you about waiting at the airport) of people who were going to baggage claim and were having to wait 10 or 15 minutes for their bags, maybe longer.

So, they had this meeting. I don't know how all this went, but they had this meeting at Houston airport, and some genius looked at everything and realized, "Wait a second. What's happening is they're getting off their plane, and it only takes them two or three minutes to get to baggage claim, and then they're waiting at baggage claim for 10 or 15 minutes." He said, "Let's move baggage claim."

So they moved baggage claim so it took 10 or 12 minutes to get to baggage claim. He said complaints dropped to zero. Wow! That's so interesting. It's "Yeah, I couldn't just stand there, do nothing, and wait. It makes me go crazy. But if I'm walking for 10 or 12 minutes, I feel like I'm actually being productive and there are things that are happening."

What we're trying to do here is be simple. *Simple*, by the way, is not the opposite of *deep*. Simple is often deep. In fact, what you don't want to be is simplistic. Think about it this way. There's *simplistic*, *complex*, and *simple*. *Simplistic* is not helpful. Here's *simplistic*: "Everything happens for a reason." If you're suffering and someone says that, you're like, "I hate you. Please don't say that to me." It's too simple. It's too low resolution. It doesn't work.

Simplistic is fast but shallow. *Complex* is deep but slow. It's like, "All right. Let me give you a systematic theology on God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Here's a book on theodicy, a defense of God's goodness in the face of evil." The average person is never, ever going to read that. So, what you want to do is *simple*. *Simple* is fast but deep.

I want you to know that here at Two Cities, we try...I try, as the main teacher here...we try so hard. I study all week to hopefully be simple right now. So, we want to give you something that's plain, simple, but also portable. This is one of the reasons we talk about Community Groups. Community Groups are where you work all this out and actually try to apply it to your lives.

Okay. So follow me. He basically says, "Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to stay where I am. I'm going to get up on the tower. I'm going to wait for God to speak to me. God is going to give me a vision. I'm trying to get the clearest, simplest, most portable version of what God has said, and then I'm going to do something with it."

I'll give you an example. Here's something that is from God's Word that you can do when you're suffering. Remember when Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow, for today has enough worries of itself"? There's a principle in there for suffering and for waiting. Here's the principle: when you're suffering, you shorten the time frame. It really works.

I remember I was talking to a lady in our church years ago. She called me up and said, "Pastor Kyle, I have this cast on my leg. I've had it on forever, and I don't want it on anymore. It's itchy, and I can't move around. I've got it for eight more weeks." She said, "I can't wait eight more weeks." I can't remember how the whole conversation went, but I said something like, "Well, could you do four weeks?" "I can't do four weeks!" We got it down to "Well, do you feel like you could make it to Wednesday?"

"I could do that."

"Well, you just have to keep doing that."

We love being able to look way far in advance, but when you're waiting and suffering... The more intense the suffering... I've met people whose suffering is so intense it is "I need to get through the next hour." "Great. We're going to humble ourselves and shorten our time frame to one hour, and I'm doing it with you. Let's go."

The next thing we need is faith. We need vision, but we need faith. Look here. Verse 4: "***Behold, his soul is puffed up...***" That's pride. It's the opposite of faith. "***...it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.***" Interestingly enough, God's vision is two ways of living.

We often look at people... It's a very diverse world, and there are a lot of perspectives and ideologies and beliefs and personalities, so it's easy to think, "There are a million different ways to live." The answer, according to the Bible, is there are two ways to live. There's *by faith* or *puffed up*, which is prideful. There are two ways to live: looking to ourselves (that's puffed up) or looking to God.

It's interesting, because what he's going to do for the rest of the chapter, which we'll go over briefly, is he's going to give us two ways of living. He's going to tell us what *not* to do and then *what* to do. The main thing... It's interesting. He sums up the entire Christian life as living by faith.

One commentator said it's really amazing that Habakkuk could do this. Think about this for a while. It's not easy to take something very complex and simplify it. The Bible is 66 books written by 39 authors over 1,500 years in 3 different languages. It's not easy to simplify.

One author said it's really interesting. Moses was able to take the whole Old Testament law, underneath the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and get it down to 10 things, the Ten Commandments. Pretty cool. Another guy said it's interesting because Micah... He wrote a book called by his own name. One author said it's really cool. Micah actually took the 10 things of Moses and got it down to three. He said, "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God."

They said Habakkuk is one of the only people in the Bible who gets it down to one thing. What do you do when you're waiting? You live by faith. What does this mean? It means you don't live by feelings. Feelings go up and feelings go down. We care about your feelings. We genuinely do. Habakkuk has a lot of feelings. But, obviously, everything you feel isn't real. Feelings cannot be at the center of our experience.

How about this one? We're to live by faith; we're not to live by religious activity. I have seen people get enormously religious when they start to suffer. They want to come to everything we do all the time. It's so interesting. All of a sudden, you want to show up

at everything. That's great. I just want to make sure you understand this is not about religious activity.

You'll see people suffering. "I'm reading my Bible every day." We don't live by devotions. We live by faith. I hope you're having faith. "I'm praying every morning. I'm going to church. I went to this prayer meeting. I went to this women's Bible study." People get manic in their religious activity when things are not going the way they want. That's fine if underneath that religious activity is genuine faith and trust in God.

How about this? We live by faith; we don't live by results. You know the verse that says, "We live by faith not by sight." That's what that means. Modern translation: "I live by faith, not by results. I may not see everything." So, I want to talk about what faith is. *Faith* is active trust in God's character.

This is so important. This is going to get pretty real for some of us in just a minute. Here's what happens. Whenever you're suffering or waiting for something you're not getting that you wish you were, you have to always say these three things: "I can't change the past, and I can't control the future, so I will trust God in the present." That's faith.

Let me just tell you. I've been a minister for 20 years now. I know how this works. If you're a normal person, this is what's going to happen to you, I promise. I want to tell you right now if this has never happened to you before. When you are suffering, one of the first things you'll do is scour your conscience for anything wrong you did in the past to lead you here. Who could put up with that? There's going to be something, obviously.

Let me give you an example. Here's what happens. Some lady and her husband can't get pregnant, and they're 35 years old. They will scour... Especially the wife will scour her conscience. "I knew I should have gotten married earlier. I knew we shouldn't have tried to be 'double income, no kids' for so long. Why did I not try to have kids when it was the most natural and I was the most fertile to have kids?"

Believe me. Every woman asks herself that question when she can't have kids. Every person who's single and wishes they were married and is getting older... Everybody has that moment. "Maybe I should have dated that guy in high school." "Maybe she wasn't as bad as I thought. Is she still on Facebook?"

When you get a diagnosis... I mean, this is just what will happen. It could be completely unrelated, but you will scour your conscience. You'll be like, "Dude, I shouldn't have done that. I know I've been eating unhealthily. I've been drinking too much. I ate too much processed stuff." Whatever it is. When you're struggling

financially, you'll go back and be like, "Why did I...? I knew I shouldn't have taken this career path." I could go on and on and on.

The whole point is you're going to have these moments where you're going to have to say, "God, I'm trusting you in the present, because I cannot change the past." One pastor I heard said this is what you do. You confess the past, you cry over the past, and then you wash your face, get up, and trust God in the present, because you can't control the future. That's what we've been talking about.

So, he says, "I live by faith." Here's what unbelief says: "I will not believe it until I see it." That's unbelief. We see that on the college campus. We see that everywhere. Here's what faith says: "I will believe it until I see it." "I'm going to believe what I see in the Word even if I don't see it in the world, and hopefully *until* I see it in the world, or maybe I won't even see it until I get to heaven."

Faith doesn't make everything okay; faith makes *you* okay when everything is not okay. It's interesting that the one word and the main vision God gives Habakkuk in the midst of suffering is to live by faith, active trust, in the goodness and character of God. You're going to have to decide at the end of the day "What is going to be the center of my life? Is it going to be my experience of things or God's character and his Word?"

That leads to this last thing. I want to show you this last thing. Turn with me to verse 5. He's talking about the negative vision, the prideful, puffed-up person. ***Moreover, wine is a traitor, an arrogant man who is never at rest. His greed is as wide as Sheol; like death he has never enough. He gathers for himself all nations and collects as his own all peoples.***

Look at verse 6. ***Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing and riddles for him, and say...*** Basically, for the rest of the chapter, God taunts the enemies of God's people. Taunting is basically to mock the opposing team. That's what God is doing.

This is really interesting. When I was thinking about waiting and this theme of waiting in this text, I tried to think, like I've been talking about this morning... I tried to think about all of the things we wait for, and I put it into some categories. Sometimes we're waiting for good things that haven't happened yet. We could talk about that for a long time.

Other people are waiting for bad things to stop happening. You know, "How much longer am I going to have seizures and migraines? I'm waiting for that to stop

happening." Then there's a whole other group of people who are waiting for other people to do something. Like, "I'm waiting."

Well, that's all good. What I didn't realize (this is why it's so helpful to study God's Word and walk through books of the Bible) is in verses 6-19, which is 14 verses... I'll just show you this really briefly. The number-one thing God ends up talking to his people about that they're waiting for is something I didn't even think of.

Do you know what it is? They're waiting for justice. I thought, "Wow! How American am I that I'm not even thinking like this?" What are most people all over the world...? They're under some dictator government. They're under some totalitarian state. There's no religious liberty. There's no freedom of speech.

That's where the church has existed for most of its life. They're persecuted. They're attacked. They're martyred. Of course most Christians through most of human history were waiting for justice. "God, when are you going to make things right?" This is what it said in the book of Revelation. "How much longer, God?"

Let me just show you quickly what God is going to do. First of all, verse 6: ***"Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—for how long?—and loads himself with pledges!"*** Basically, God does five "woes" with the rest of these verses. In the first "woe" he says, "I'm going to get justice for people who've taken from you what is rightfully yours."

In a room of this size with this many people, I'm sure this has happened to somebody. It's normally your ex-[whatever]. Your ex-business partner took some money he shouldn't have or took part of the business he shouldn't have. Sometimes it's an ex-boyfriend, and he took your dignity.

Sometimes you had a bad parent, and it's like, "You took my childhood." Sometimes something is taken from you, and God says, "I know you're waiting for justice." By the way, this is why we have to have an eternal perspective. This is where we're going to end. God says, "I promise one day this will be made right."

Here's the second one. Verse 12: ***"Woe to him who builds a town with blood and founds a city on iniquity!"*** He basically says, "I'm going to get justice for those who are violent." Again, I would imagine in a room of this size that some of you have experienced abuse. I don't know when it happened, and I don't know who you told, and I don't know how it was dealt with, but a lot of times in these stories there's that feeling of, "Nope. They didn't really get what they deserved."

Jump back to verse 9. I skipped over one. **"Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to be safe from the reach of harm!"** What is he saying there? "I promise I'm going to get justice for the people who have been protected from getting justice." He says, "They make their nest really high."

We all know this. We all live in a society (this is probably true anywhere on earth) where certain people have access to certain lawyers, certain networks, and a certain amount of money. It feels like they're so protected. It's like, "We tried. We took them to court. It didn't work." God is saying, "I'm going to get justice."

Then maybe most relevant for where we are today, verse 15: **"Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—you pour out your wrath and make them drunk, in order to gaze at their nakedness!"** Interesting. **"You will have your fill of shame instead of glory. Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision! The cup [of wrath] in the LORD's right hand will come around to you..."**

This is a big category of people being exploited. I don't know the exact statistics on this, but I do know this. It is much more likely for a woman (or a man, but it's usually women) to report being abused than to report being sexually assaulted or abused. We think it has something to do with the shame or embarrassment connected to that. We know there are people who take advantage of others. Look at that language: "Get drunk to stare at their nakedness," that exploiting others.

God says, "I am going to make all things right one day, but you're going to have to wait." He has a final thing on idolatry, but I want you to see how he ends in verse 20. He gives a final picture. It's not uncommon for God to end this way. **"But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."** This is the final word while you wait.

It's interesting. There's a scene in Exodus 14 you can look up where Moses and the Israelites need to fight this group and God says, "Be still, and I will fight for you." Psalm 46, which I think is probably the most gone to psalm in suffering... If you're ever going to the hospital with somebody... Somebody calls you to the hospital. You're like, "What should I give them? What should I give them?" Psalm 46 would be a good place to start.

It's probably God's people's favorite psalm on suffering. It's "God is a refuge." If you'll read it, you'll recognize it. Anyway, at the end of that psalm, God says, "Be still and know that I will be exalted in all of the earth." Here's what God is saying. Literally, in the Hebrew, it is the word... It's not that hard to communicate, but it sounds like and has the same effect of the word *Shh!* or *Hush!*

It's kind of like when you're trying to start up your Community Group and everyone... "Shh!" Or some of you who are serving in the kids' ministry. "The parents are about to get here. Shh!" Right? If you've ever been in a room like that where... It could be a dinner event. Somebody finally gets on the mic and quiets everyone. It usually takes a second, and then everything gets very quiet.

Here's the thing. If we're not good at waiting, we might be worse at being silent. My brother, who's three years younger than me, told me one time he was going on a golf trip with some of his friends, and somehow during the trip, on the last day, he lost his phone. He said, "Kyle, I had to drive home without my phone for seven hours. It was one of the worst experiences of my life."

You don't know what to do if you can't turn on a podcast, if you can't check the news, if you can't watch your favorite show, if you can't go on your favorite social media accounts. Here's what normally happens. Whenever we get silent (this is my experience), it gets very loud on the inside. I have to deal with my emotions. I have to deal with my feelings. I have to deal with my doubts. Most importantly, I have to deal with God.

Here's the interesting thing. The book starts out in chapter 1, verse 2, basically, "God, why are you being silent?" and it ends in chapter 2, verse 20, "Habakkuk, I think it's time for you to be silent." I wonder if sometimes we think God is silent because we are not silent and are not giving God the space for him to speak to us.

We're going to end this service a little bit differently today than we've ever ended a service. In light of this idea of being silent, in just a minute I'm going to show you a video, and then Donovan is going to come out and sing over us while we're silent and seated, and then he's going to pray over us.

Here's why: I'm going to show you a video of a guy in a second. We've gotten permission by his wife, which is so kind of her. I'm going to show you a video of Adam DeHass. This guy was in our church, and he died of cancer in October. We were able to shoot this video before that happened, and we didn't know what direction it was going to go in. Adam had colon cancer and was on about a three-year journey where he had been praying for God to heal him.

Sometimes we're waiting for others to do something, and sometimes we're waiting for good things to start and bad things to stop. Here's the thing. Sometimes we're waiting for something we're not going to get here but we're going to get in heaven. That's very hard on us. You're going to see the video in a minute. I'm going to let him tell his own story, but I can summarize it, because I've seen the video.

Here's what Adam basically says even in the video, because he doesn't know what's going to happen. He's like, "My family and I have one big prayer request." It's the same one *you'd* have. One big prayer request. You'll see it. It's like, "I have little kids, God. I have one big prayer request. It would be that I could get healed." From a biblical perspective, God answered his prayer, but he healed him in heaven, not here.

I don't know if you ever saw Tony Evans... He's a famous pastor. His wife died, and his son spoke at the funeral. The son said, "When Mom was really sick, we got to this place. We said, 'Mom is either going to be healed or she's going to be healed. Mom is either going to be with family or she's going to be with family.'" He said, "We had to get there."

It makes what Jesus did so sweet. Adam was waiting for his healing. He got it in heaven. Now his family is waiting for something they can't have on this side. They long to be reunited with their dad and with her husband.

If you'll close your eyes and pray with me, I want us to prepare our hearts in a moment of silence. Often, there's so much going on...our phones, our families, our lives, and our businesses. I just want us to quiet ourselves. We're about to see a story. This really happened.

We're going to see a family walk through and trust you, Lord. Lord, help us. We want to always be praying for healing. We want to always be believing as big as we can. We also want to realize that sometimes, Lord, we pray and you have a different plan. Lord, you answer every prayer. Sometimes it's "Yes." Sometimes it's "No."

Sometimes it's "Not now." Sometimes it's "Yes, but not in the way you're wanting me to answer that prayer." Lord, would you build here a church that trusts you, that can honestly say, "We can't change the past, we can't control the future, but we are trusting you together in the present." We ask this in your name, amen.