

Text: Habakkuk 3:3-15, Title: Our God Is A Warrior, Date/Place: The Road, 7.9.17, AM

- A. Opening illustration: It is gratitude that prompted an old man to visit an old broken pier on the eastern seacoast of Florida. Every Friday night, until his death in 1973, he would return, walking slowly and slightly stooped with a large bucket of shrimp. The sea gulls would flock to this old man, and he would feed them from his bucket. Oct 1942, out of range, crash in ocean, fighting sharks and weather, food ran out.
- B. Background to passage: Review the uniqueness of Hab 3, and its structure. Remind them of how Habakkuk is choosing to deal with a very difficult, heart-wrenching, unbelievable situation. He affirms God's plan, submits to it, and begins to worship. Review the refrain of verse two. Now we will look at the verses of this song that was to be sung in the midst of punishment. Note the song. Note the only request.
- C. Main thought: We will see three reminders of who God is in these song verses.

A. **The Presence of God (v. 3-8)**

1. Theophany. "The passage forms the most extensive and elaborate theophany to be found in the Old Testament." Teman and Paran were areas in the southernmost part of Israel, down near the Sinai Peninsula. This is the area in which the nationality of God's people was solidified with His permanent presence among them. The prophet here is reminding Judah of God's presence during the coming tribulation. But we must notice the language and imagery that Habakkuk uses to describe God's manifest presence among them. He says that the "glory" of God covered the heavens. This word means splendor, vigor, majesty, and authority. Note the language of brightness. Talk about the blazing brightness of the Shekinah glory of God. Destruction goes before Him. The sight of Him startles the nations. The mountains melt, and the hills bow down. These were allusions to the sites of worship of the Canaanite gods. Then he speaks of His eternity and infinitude. Habakkuk reminds the people of the power of the presence of God during the coming dark times.
2. Ex 33:22-23, 34:33, Ezek 10:4, Micah 1:2-4, Rev 1:12-17, Matt 28:20
3. **Illustration:** the other day at Kathy Nadeau's when the sun was so bright that I could hardly see to talk with her. the book *When People are Big and God is Small*, In Bill Moyers's book *A World of Ideas II*, Jacob Needleman remembers, "I was an observer at the launch of Apollo 17 in 1975. It was a night launch, and there were hundreds of cynical reporters all over the lawn, drinking beer, wisecracking, and waiting for this 35-story-high rocket. "The countdown came, and then the launch. The first thing you see is this extraordinary orange light, which is just at the limit of what you can bear to look at. Everything is illuminated with this light. Then comes this thing slowly rising up in total silence, because it takes a few seconds for the sound to come across. You hear a 'WHOOOOOSH! HHHHMMMM!' It enters right into you. "You can practically hear jaws dropping. The sense of wonder fills everyone in the whole place, as this thing goes up and up. The first stage ignites this beautiful blue flame. It becomes like a star, but you realize there are humans on it. And then there's total silence. "People just get up quietly, helping each other up. They're kind. They open doors. They look at one another, speaking quietly and interestedly. These were suddenly moral people because the sense of wonder, the experience of wonder, had made them moral." When we have a sense of wonder toward God, we too have our lives changed for the better. First half of the quote from Piper's *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, p. 38-40,
4. In our times of tribulation, we must gain a greater understanding of the majesty of God's presence. Our understanding of the "bigness" of God is miniscule to the reality of His person. Try to imagine the immensity of God, and the brightness of his glory. "I've experienced God's presence most powerfully in worship, often during the singing, I suppose because when we sing to him, we are looking hard in his direction."—J. I. Packer. Try imagining the presence of God during the singing. We must realize that God is with us. Through the darkness valleys and nights, through the storms that rage, through the battles, fires that engulf, heartaches that crush, and to the ends of the earth and ages, He is there. He has never and will never leave you. Only on the cross has he forsaken a child of his, and that was so that he would never forsake you. Rest in that presence. Ask God to really show up in your life—not to do anything, but just for Him to be in your conscious presence. Then watch out! If God is there, everything is going to be alright. Regardless what is going on in your life, if you can get into the presence of God endless joy, peace, courage, confidence can be found. These resources are found in limitless capacities within the person of God.

B. The Partiality (Favor) of God (v. 9-13a)

1. Habakkuk then sings of God as a bowman striding forth to in wrath to accomplish the vindication and salvation and deliverance of His people. This goes back to God's promise to recompense the Babylonians for what they had done. Again, notice the power of God to deliver. Nothing can stop Him, withstand Him, overpower Him, escape Him, thwart Him, or delay Him. Notice the language, all creation (rivers, oceans, mountains, even the sun and moon) tremble for the delivering power of God. His wrath is kindled at those that do evil, especially against His people. This further strengthens Habakkuk's plea for the just to live by faith and put their hope in the Lord. His deliverance here is a reminder of past deliverance – Exodus. A form of the name of God used is very old, dating back, reinforcing this helpful piece. Verse 13a gives us the reason and motivation – God is for his people. Discipline, yes, forsaken, no. His lovingkindness, mercy, and compassion for those that are his compels him to rescue!
2. Ex 15:3, Isa 42:13, Zeph 3:17, Rom 8:31-35, Ps 68:19-21, Luk 12:32, Job 16:14
3. **Illustration:** Delivering Kaitlann from the crying in the crib to a place of rest, A little over a month before he died, the famous atheist Jean-Paul Sartre declared that he so strongly resisted feelings of despair that he would say to himself, "I know I shall die in hope." Then in profound sadness, he would add, "But hope needs a foundation." "With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures."
4. This is the foundation of our hope—that we serve a God who is preparing our deliverance. Remember also that He is always right on time. And no circumstance is beyond his abilities. And it may not be the deliverance that we have prayed for, but it is the best. A. W. Tozer speaks about the inscrutable wisdom of God, and how that no other plan could be imagined that was better than God's plan. Trust in His love, power, and purpose to deliver you. We must always remember the second possible outcome of believing that God is our Creator-Warrior, He may defeat your enemies, but He may defeat us! Remember that Habakkuk's first complaint was all the sin that Judah was getting away with. Remember that all deliverance or delay of deliverance is designed for the glory of God, not for the ease of the believers.

C. The Penalties of God (v. 13b-15)

1. Habakkuk again looking to a situation of deliverance that is to come. Remember that the fall of Jerusalem has not even taken place yet. But it is almost like Habakkuk is there, seeing it in a vision. And he is talking about how God will crush the head of the enemy. He also speaks of how God would use all the weapons that the enemy had used to crush Him.
2. Est 7:10, Dan 6:24, Rom 11:33-36, Rev 6:10, 14:10,
3. **Illustration:** "Rather than being terrified at the strength of their enemies, God's people ought to rest confidently in the assurance that the strength of the enemies' power only displays their capacity to destroy themselves."—Roberts, "God refuses to stand above the fray and idly watch human injustice run amok. God crosses time and space to enter into the sinful messiness of human existence to save those who are most victimized by the world's ways."—Brown, second half of the quote from Piper's *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, p. 40-41
4. Jonathan Edwards once said that it was his purpose in preaching to raise the affections of his hearers to the highest possible realm in truth. He believed that it was not enough for God to be intellectually or even religiously known, but that what was known about God should be rejoice in and loved for God to actually gain the most glory from it. This is the message of Habakkuk in this text. Come, look, and see GOD! Trust in His power! Rejoice in Him! Expand your knowledge and love of Him! Don't look at circumstances, but look at Him! Believe His promises, and live accordingly. Gotta stop because I am crossing into next week's message.

A. Closing illustration: Psalm 97

B. Recap

C. Invitation to commitment

Additional Notes

- SO WHAT???