



Life Group Sermon Study Notes

“Unite Nashville 2020: God Knows Best”

Sr. Ps. James Lowe – June 14, 2020

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What made you smile today?
- If you could say anything to your five-year-old self, what would you say?
- If you were able to do a Zoom call with a famous person who would it be?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Dissatisfaction seems to be the norm for everyone in our society – discontent with the government, humanity and life in general. Who do we go to for answers to relieve us of this deep sense of despair? The prophet Habakkuk found himself in a similar situation, where cultural tension was high. He found it difficult to understand where God was in the midst of injustice, violence and division. Habakkuk shows us why and how to bring our complaints about the chaos of life to God.

Man’s viewpoint

Habakkuk was a prophet; meaning he knew how to hear from God and was familiar with his ways. Yet, just like all humans, he only saw in part and became overwhelmed by his sensory experiences. It’s in our nature to try to piece together what we can do to make things better. Is it not a matter of getting all the experts in the room and progress will happen? Habakkuk had a different approach. He took his complaints for having to endure rampant chaos to God. The book of Habakkuk teaches us that God was not bothered by Habakkuk’s accusations of being idle and letting justice be perverted. Habakkuk’s approach of posing questions to God put him in position to let his faith override what his surroundings were telling him. Habakkuk couldn’t believe God’s response of using a wicked nation to bring judgement. Yet Habakkuk knew that going to another human wouldn’t do it; he kept going to God until he had the conviction that the just shall live by faith. Will we go to each other with our complaints to seek solutions or will we go to God?

God's viewpoint

God responded to Habakkuk's complaints – in so many words – by saying you have no idea the work that I am doing to bring about justice. The justice of God is often brought forth through calamity. God uses devastation as an opportunity for us to evaluate our lives, repent, love God and one another at a greater level. The other aspect of justice is overcoming wicked spiritual forces. Often we forget that our problems are not with each other. We all have our own selfish desires and the god of this world, Satan, is opposing the redemptive plans of God. God has given us the answer for victory over sin in our heart and in the world; his name is Jesus. "The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus constitute one unified act of God for overcoming sin and saving the world" (Prison Fellowship International Centre for Justice and Reconciliation).

Our Response

The greatest action that humanity can take starts in the humble yet powerful place of prayer. Prayer is a continuous conversation we have with God to see his perspective. He will remind us that his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. God wants to do for us what he did for Habakkuk; welcoming our cries while adjusting and strengthening our faith. Habakkuk was able to declare that the just shall live by faith. This scripture is also echoed by the apostle Paul in the book of Romans. The scripture below is Romans 12, when Paul explains how to respond to the mercy of God to grant salvation to humanity through Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- How have the current world events tested how much you trust God to intervene?
- Share what verse stands out to you the most and why from Romans 12:14-21.

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.

- Thank God that righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne from where love and faithfulness come.
- Ask God to forgive us for acting in self-righteousness and not loving others how he has loved us.
- Ask God for strength and patience to wait for his response.