



Living By Faith
Habakkuk

MEMORY VERSE

HABAKKUK 2:4

“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A blindfold for every two children.

A Bible, a marker and index cards.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Twenty Questions

Habakkuk had some questions for God in our lesson today. For a fun introduction, play a game of 20 questions. Before class come up with five words or phrases from your lesson that could be used in other areas. Words like faith, prophet, God, Babylon, etc. are good. Allow the children to ask 20 questions. You can give a hint such as “I am a person” or “I am a place” or “I am a thing.” Make it easier for the younger children. If it is difficult you can give more hints. When done, introduce the lesson by saying that Habakkuk had some questions for God.

LESSON TIME!

We do not know much about the prophet Habakkuk. We do know that he was trained for ministry and his office of prophet. He was a man of strong faith, but he is mainly known for the questions he asked God. Habakkuk was not afraid to ask questions!

Habakkuk wrote his prophecy about the time that the invasion of Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel) by the Babylonians was imminent. Babylon had overthrown Nineveh and Egypt, and Jerusalem was next in line for invasion. Habakkuk probably ministered about the same time period as Jeremiah.

HABAKKUK 1:1-4

The burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

O LORD, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save.

Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble?
For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises.

Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth.
For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

During Habakkuk's time, the people had turned away from God. An evil king reigned and the people served idols and lived sinful lives. Habakkuk looked at all the evil around him and was overwhelmed. He questioned God, "Why do You allow Your people to live wickedly without punishment; do You not care? How long will You put up with all of this?"

Sometimes, we can look around at the evil that exists and the bad things that happen around us and wonder, "How long will God allow this to happen?" We wonder when the Lord will come back to usher in His kingdom. We do not know when God will judge the world or make the wrongs right, but we do know He is merciful and patient

Have you ever had a question for God? God does not get angry with Habakkuk for having questions, and He will not be upset when we have questions. Sometimes, we need to wait patiently to hear the Lord on the matters that concern us. Whatever that answer may be, we can be assured that "God is for us." He will do what is best.
When in doubt, walk by faith!

HABAKKUK 1:5-11

"Look among the nations and watch; Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.

For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs.

They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.

Their horses also are swifter than leopards, And more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; Their cavalry comes from afar; They fly as the eagle that hastens to eat.

"They all come for violence; Their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand.

They scoff at kings, And princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, For they heap up earthen mounds and seize it.

Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, Ascribing this power to his god."

Though it appeared to Habakkuk that God was taking no action, God was in control and doing what was best. Israel's sin had not gone unnoticed. God answered Habakkuk. God was at that very time raising up the Babylonians to bring judgment upon His people.

We, like Habakkuk, may find ourselves in a tough situation and feel that God is not responding to our cries. So often, we do not realize that God is working something out on our behalf “behind the scenes.” Perhaps, His work of help and deliverance began before we even knew about our problem.

HABAKKUK 1:12-17

Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O LORD, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction.

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them?

They take up all of them with a hook, They catch them in their net, And gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad.

Therefore they sacrifice to their net, And burn incense to their dragnet; Because by them their share is sumptuous And their food plentiful.

Shall they therefore empty their net, And continue to slay nations without pity?

God's answer to Habakkuk's first question prompts Habakkuk to ask another question. Habakkuk does not understand why God would use a wicked nation, the Babylonians, to bring judgment on His people. He knew the nation of Babylon served false gods and had no regard for the true and the living God. Why would God use a nation that was even more wicked than Israel to bring God's judgment upon Israel?

Israel turned from God. As a result, they would have to serve very cruel masters. Since Israel loved their sin more than God, they would find themselves the slaves to a people given over to practicing sin. When a person gives over to sin, it always leads to bondage and slavery to the sin by which he has been overcome. Perhaps suffering at the hands of the Babylonians would demonstrate to God's people that sin is terrible in the fruit it produces and the bondage it creates.

We, like Habakkuk, may not understand all of God's ways or purposes, but we do not need to understand. Let us trust that God is working. As His children, we know He has a good plan in store for us. Romans 8:28 states, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." **When in doubt, walk by faith!**

Walk by Faith

Have the children do this fun activity to learn how to trust God and "live by faith." You will need a blindfold for every two children. Have the children partner up in twos. Have one volunteer to be "faith." The other will be the "guide." Have your aide (or designated adult or helper) take the "faith" students outside of the classroom door. Explain to them that they will have a blindfold and have to rely on their "guide" to help them through an obstacle course. Next blindfold the "faith" students.

Meanwhile, explain to the “guide” students who have remained in the classroom that they will be the “guides” for the “faith” students. Their job will be to help their partner through the obstacle course. Explain that the “guide” may hold the arm of “faith” and lead them through the course. The guide may *only* tell them to move left or right, forward or backward. Leave enough space between pairs to allow for slow movement and possible confusion.

Next set up a simple obstacle course in your room using chairs, tables or other items that the “guide” students and “faith” students will have to go over or around. When your classroom is ready, signal to your helper to bring the “faith” students in. Have the children line up and take turns as pairs going through the obstacle course, again only using the directions from the “guide” as listed above.

When completed have all of the “faith” students remove their blindfolds and then ask all of the children to set the classroom back in order and return to their seats. Ask the faith students what was it like to not know where they were going? Did you have to rely on your guide? What would happen if you did not have a guide? Explain that this is like living by faith. We have to trust in Jesus to guide us through this life. We have to put our faith and trust in Him to get us where He wants us to be.

HABAKKUK 2:1-4

I will stand my watch
And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say to me,
And what I will answer when I am corrected.

Then the LORD answered me and said:
"Write the vision
And make it plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.

"Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

God responds to Habakkuk again. God encourages Habakkuk toward patience. God reassures Habakkuk that His plan and purpose will be accomplished, in time. God also encourages Habakkuk to rest in faith. Though Habakkuk might not understand the tools and methods God uses, God was working; He was in control, and one day His plan would be fulfilled. One day, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord like the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14).

HABAKKUK 3:17-19

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

A man of faith, Habakkuk was content to rest all His questions and trust in God. Habakkuk closes with a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving and faith. Even though things happen that may seem troubling or not right, he was still going to trust in the Lord. Even though there are no blossoms on the fig tree, fruit on the vines, no oil from the olives, food from the crops, no more flocks of sheep or herds of cattle he says, “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” The word “rejoice” in Hebrew literally means “leap for joy.” The word “joy” in Hebrew literally means “to spin around under the influence of great emotion, such as joy.”

What could enable Habakkuk to be such a “man of faith” despite what he saw happening around him. Habakkuk not only knew the One who was in control, he leaned upon Him. Habakkuk cites, “The Lord God is my strength....”

Perhaps, there are things happening in your life that you do not understand. Perhaps, you have questions. God never told Habakkuk that he should not bring his questions to Him. God gives Habakkuk the answers he needs, encouraging him to trust in Him and to walk in faith. As we bring our questions and requests to God, He desires that we experience “the peace of God which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

When the things that are happening around you do not seem to make sense, can you jump for joy and spin around like Habakkuk did? Let us, like Habakkuk, learn to walk by faith and not by sight!
When in doubt, walk by faith!

Spell the Prophet Game

As a review of the 12 Minor Prophets studied so far, play this fun game of “Spell the Prophet.” You will need Bibles, a marker and index cards. Before class print the alphabet on index cards, one

letter on each card. Make two sets of letter cards. Add five blank cards to each set (for names that have more than one of the same letter in it).

Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a set of cards to be divided as evenly as possible among team members. Call out one of the minor prophet's names. The students on each team holding the letters should work together to arrange the letters to correctly spell the word. When the team members think they are in the correct order, they should call out, "done!" and everyone immediately freezes. Verify if the spelling is correct, but do not say how it is spelled in case it is wrong and the other team can have a chance. If it is incorrect, the other team can unfreeze and try to spell it correctly. The team who spells it correctly gets one point. Keep track of the points on the board. The game continues on with another name. When time is called, the team with the most points wins.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to always trust in God, walking by faith even when times are rough and there are many questions. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.