

Discipleship Group Weekly Resources

Week 10

Passage: Habakkuk 1

Big Thought:

Habakkuk is another of the “minor prophets.” Minor doesn’t mean less important, but are “minor” only because their writings are brief. Not much is known about Habakkuk except he is a prophet (1:1; 3:1) and may have been a priest connected with the temple worship in Jerusalem. He is poetic as well as prophetic, and seems to be a sensitive man. The origin of his name is uncertain, but several commentators trace his name to the Hebrew word habaq which means “embrace” and may mean “one who embraces.” If so, it is fitting because he chooses to hold on to God even while he doesn’t get the answers he wants while his nation is wasting.

While Habakkuk’s name may not come to mind quickly, his question echoes in our hearts—WHY? He’s not the first person to ask that and isn’t the last. Habakkuk is the only minor prophet that never addresses the people. He isn’t a prophet crying out to the people, but to God. While he sees the spiritual decline of his nation, he wonders, “Why God do you let this happen?” He is also distressed because of God’s silence (1:1). Habakkuk believes that God is the One true God, that God was all powerful, and good in every way. He knows God could do something about what was occurring, so why not do it? All through scripture, it is not unbelief, but deep faith that prompts the cry of “why” or “how long?”

Habakkuk will get some answers to his questions that burden his heart. It is possible not to get answers, because we have no questions. The only thing worse than the cry of “why” is never to have a cry at all.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, a Hindu convert to Christianity, became a missionary to his people in India. Late one afternoon Sadhu was traveling on foot through the Himalayas with a Buddhist monk. It was bitterly cold, and the wind felt like sharp blades slicing into their skins. Night was fast approaching when the monk warned Sadhu that they were in danger of freezing to death if they did not reach the monastery before darkness fell.

Suddenly, on a narrow path above a steep precipice, they heard a cry for help. At the foot of the cliff lay a man, fallen and badly hurt. The monk looked at Sadhu and said, "Do not stop. God has brought this man to his fate. He must work it out for himself. Let us hurry on before we, too, perish."

But Sadhu replied, "God has sent me here to help my brother. I cannot abandon him."

The monk continued trudging off through the whirling snow, while the missionary clambered down the steep embankment. The injured man's leg was broken, and he could not walk, so Sadhu made a sling of his blanket and tied the man on his back. With great difficulty he climbed back up the cliff, drenched by now in perspiration.

Doggedly, Sadhu made his way through the deepening snow and darkness. It was all he could do to follow the path. But he persevered, though faint with fatigue and overheated from exertion. Finally, he saw ahead the lights of the monastery.

Then, for the first time, Sadhu stumbled and nearly fell. But not from weakness. He had stumbled over an object lying in the snow-covered road. Slowly he bent down on one knee and brushed the snow off the object. It was the body of the monk, frozen to death.

Years later a disciple of Sadhu's asked him, "What is life's most difficult task?"

Without hesitation Sadhu replied: "To have no burden to carry."

4 Questions:

1. Habakkuk is "honest to God" about his grievances without ever becoming irreverent. How can one be honest and reverent in their prayers?
2. What is a "cry of why" that you've experienced or felt in your life?
3. How have you coped with the silence of God in your life?
4. Do you agree that "All through scripture, it is not unbelief, but deep faith that prompts the cry of "why" or "how long?" Why or why not?