

## Sermon Transcription • Habakkuk 2 (NIV)

### God's Answer to Our Questions

Pastor Ezra Okoti

**[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]**

The book of Habakkuk is an invitation to a conversation that the prophet is having with God. So imagine if you're in a town hall meeting—town hall meeting and Habakkuk is standing on the mic and God is seated in the front and Habakkuk is asking questions that you've been asking the same questions in your mind, but you've never had an opportunity to face God face-to-face and have this dialogue. And so Habakkuk is face-to-face with God, we've been invited into this conversation and the questions are hard questions. Like, "Lord why is it that there's so much violence around? Why is it that there is no answered prayer? Lord, why is it that you seem to not be doing anything when the problems of life and the challenges of life come about?" So for example, just watched a little video: this lady Tessa who's having this illness that is now there—permanently there. Okay, so obviously she's been praying and asking God, "Lord take it away!" but it seems like....he's not. So what do you do with that? So Habakkuk is asking God all these questions and the Lord is responding. So today we're in chapter two of this interesting dialogue between the prophet and God.

Now I want you to imagine...I want you to imagine that it is summer vacation, and you and your spouse and your two boys are going camping. Now your two sons are phenomenal sons: Jeff and Ezra, okay? So your two kids, phenomenal kids, and Ezra is four, Jeff is five—is a little older...so you're camping now. Okay? So you're there, Cultus Lake, you've set up your tents and everything, it's fantastic. So the boys are all excited, now out there in nature, so you tell the boys, "Boys, you can play, play where we can see you, *but* please don't go into the bushes. Don't go to the bushes. Just play where we can see you, have fun.. you know, pick up some rocks, whatever, but no bushes please and thank you." So there you are, relaxed, in the sun with your sunscreen on, basking like a desert lizard, in the sun. And then... your happy state is interrupted by Jeff who's coming to you, crying, crying: "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! I got an owie in my hand! An owie! An owie! Please come!" So he comes running and he's crying, and you hold his hand, but he doesn't want you to touch his hand! Why? Because it's painful and it's tender... "Don't touch! Don't—just kiss it better! Kiss it better!" "Honey, I can't kiss it better. Let me have a look at it." So you put some water on it, remove all the dirt and everything, and you look closely and you realized he has a splinter in his hand. The closer you look, you realize the splinter is so deep, it's waaaay... wedged in there... tweezers cannot reach it. Hm... And the boy is crying, this sharp object, how did it get there? "You know daddy we're playing and Ezra was chasing me, and we went to the bushes." "But I told you not to go to the bushes!" And you know, and we both know Jeff doesn't listen. So, in the bush he went and all that... So anyway. So



there the splinter is...so you decide, "Okay son, sit here." You go back to the car you take your first aid little kit and you open it up. And then you reach for this little shiny pointy thing called a needle. [holds up an imaginary needle] Then you come, Jeff is five...you begin to sanitize the needle. And then you come and then you grab Jeff's hand, and he sees... the needle. He's five, and he's hurting, and this little splinter in his hand, what do you think he's gonna do? He's gonna yell: "No! No! No! Mommy! Mommy! I want Mommy! I want Mommy! You're gonna hurt me!" Why? Because he's seen the needle. And then you tell him, "Son, in order for the splinter to come out, I have to use *this* needle!" In other words, in his mind, there's something sharp that went into my hand, something sharp went into my hand and it's hurting. And now Dad wants to stick another sharp thing into my hand—No way! This is exactly what's happening to Habakkuk, by the way.

So he's "No way! No way! No way!" And then you grab his hand and you say, "Son, look at me. Look at me." And then he calms down. Then you say, "Son, in order for this splinter to come out, I have to use the needle. I have to dig in there and get it out. And yes it will hurt. Yes, it will hurt. But it's not always going to be like this, son. It's not always going to be like this. It will hurt, yes. The splinter is in, it will hurt yes, it's not *always* going to be like this. I will pull it out. But son, I know you're scared and you're squeamish and everything and you're wiggling all over, but son... I need you to be still and know that I'm your dad. Be still. Hush, son. Know that I'm your dad. I have to remove this thing. I'll put some Polysporin on it, I'll put a Band-Aid on it. It's not always going to hurt. It's going to hurt now, but it's not always going to be like this."

See, this is the message in Habakkuk chapter two. In chapter one, Habakkuk is asking all these questions, the splinter is in the hand, "Lord! Don't you care? Don't you care? Don't you care?" Then the Lord says, "Okay, I will send the Babylonians!" This is the same way, it's as if though God is saying "I will send ISIS to solve your problems." What in the world are you talking about? ISIS is like the sharp needle! We're already in pain right now! The splinter is in! The needle is even sharper! What are you thinking? And then the Lord is saying, "Hey, hey, hey, you need to trust me here. You need to trust me. It's not always going to be like this. Hush...be still. Know that I am God." So the Lord will respond to Habakkuk's questions. And the questions are, "How could you send the Babylonians? How could you send ISIS? They are worse than the problems we have right now! The nation of Israel is wicked and sinful and Lord the best way to do it maybe is to bring a good king, who makes things better. But you've chosen to bring the Babylonians? What are you thinking?" To which the Lord will respond in chapter two: three key statements. The key statements will be found in three key verses in chapter two. So:

1. The righteous will live by faith (verse 4),
2. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God (verse 14),
3. The Lord is in his temple (verse 20).



Once again: The righteous will live by faith (verse 4)—which means “Trust me”; the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God (verse 14)—that means “It’s not always going to be this way”; (verse 20) The Lord is in His Temple—“Be still and know that I am God.”

### **The Righteous will Live by Faith**

So, first point here: the righteous will live by faith, Habakkuk 2:2-5,

“Then the Lord replied [responding to Habakkuk’s freaking out. **The Lord replied**]:

‘Write down the revelation  
and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald may run with it. [this means: write it down so that people can read and run  
and go and tell other people what I’m about to do here]  
For the revelation awaits an appointed time;  
it speaks of the end  
and will not prove false.  
Though it lingers, wait for it;  
it will certainly come  
and will not delay.

‘See, the enemy is puffed up;  
his desires are not upright—  
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness—  
indeed, wine betrays him [the him is the enemy, wine betrays the enemy];  
he is arrogant and never at rest.  
Because he is as greedy as the grave  
and like death is never satisfied,  
he gathers to himself all the nations  
and takes captive all the peoples.”

We’ll stop there. Very interesting little introduction that God brings—gives to Habakkuk, as he begins to answer Habakkuk’s questions. Now you notice in verse four and five, how God describes the enemy. God will say “See, the enemy is puffed up” meaning God is also seeing the enemy who is puffed up. Habakkuk 2:4,

“See, the enemy is puffed up;  
his desires are *not* upright— [The enemy’s desire not upright.]  
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness—  
indeed, wine betrays him”



So God is looking at the enemy and seeing “Yeah. The enemy loves him some drink and a lot of it as well. And not only that, he, the enemy, is arrogant and never at rest. So all this information God already knows about the enemy—is very important. God already knows all the information about this enemy because he, the enemy, is greedy—as greedy as the grave! And like death, never satisfied.

Wow... the Lord knows the enemy well! So it's like, I'll give you an example. You're still camping again with Ezra and Jeff, okay? So you're camping and the splinter is out and the Band-Aid is on, so the boys decide no more bushes, now they're going and wander by the creek. So they are wandering by the creek and everything. Now Jeff is a little bit of a wimp, so Ezra is pushing around. So I'm pushing Jeff around, pushing Jeff around, and he gets upset! Because he can't hold his own against me, of course. So anyway, so he now runs to you, as a parent and say “Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Mommy! Ezra, Ezra, Ezra is doing...Ezra is doing...Ezra is doing...” And Jeff's going “Ezra, Ezra, Ezra” you can hardly understand what he's saying... But you're sitting there, “Mhm, mmhm, mhm...” And then one of the ways you can calm this child down is to say what? “Son, I see...I know what Ezra is doing. I have take a note. I see. I know I've take a note.” See many times my kids come running, they've been fighting with one another, and I say “Yeah, yeah I know. I know. I know what he did. I know what she did. I know.” Most parents know, the moment you say that, the child kind of goes, because the child knows “Okay, Dad and Mom... they know. They know what's going on.” So there is this expectation that because Mom and Dad know, they'll do something... So the Lord here is saying to Habakkuk, “Hey dude, I see. I know the enemy well. I see him, I know what he's about to do and what he's doing and the motives of his heart and I've take a note. It's not gone unnoticed here.”

So the question then you may ask is: okay if the Lord sees, if the Lord knows, if the Lord has taken note. So how am I, why are you waiting for him to respond? I'm waiting for the response now... How am I supposed to deal with the onslaught that is coming if I'm Jeff and I'm in the stream with Ezra and Ezra is pushing me around. How am I supposed to be with him before Mom and Dad come and rescue the situation? What am I supposed to do?

So for example, in Egypt I had a conversation with—I was invited to a dinner by a couple that attends a church. And the Egyptian couple, and they had an Egyptian pastor come over to their home to visit, he was coming through, this Egyptian pastor and a few of his buddies. And so this couple invited me, so I go with my family and we have a meal together, it was wonderful time. But then we were fellowshipping and I asked this Egyptian pastor, “Talk to me about faith in Egypt. The state of the church in Egypt because I know Egypt is in the Arab world, so I know that it's Islam there. So talk to me, how is it there?” And this man looked at me and said, “Ezra, it's the best of times and the worst of times. Why? The best of times because in some ways, it gives us an opportunity to share Jesus with people who don't know him. People who embrace a different faith, it gives us an opportunity to share Jesus with him. But the price tag to that, man...we are so discriminated against. If you're Christian...if you're a Christian, and you're Egyptian, the likelihood of you getting a good job is very, very minimal. For you to get a mortgage, impossible. For you to do business and to thrive in business, and for you to make connections with people in key positions, very difficult if you're not Muslim. And so sometimes you wonder, how are we going to feed our families? We are persecuted against, sometime



our children are abducted. Sometimes the authorities look the other way. It's very hard, very very hard to be a Christian."

Put Egypt aside there, I traveled to Romania a number of years ago to do some mission work to help a church plant plant a church in Romania—in the back countries of Romania. So I get there, and I meet with many Romanian Christians. Some of whom lived during the time of Nicolai Ceaușescu when Nicolai Ceaușescu was dictator in Romania. And the stories these Christians would tell you...wow. They left me just dumbfounded. Many would say: Hey would be gathering in their home, the same way you'd be gathering in the home doing your community group. So you have your community group leader leading a Bible study, you'll be praying with one another, you'll be fellowshipping maybe sharing a meal, praying for each other, singing hymns to the Lord, and while you're in the middle of your community group experience, the door is kicked down, secret police are in... they roundup all the key leaders of that group, and they'll take them away and you may never see them again. These are people with families. Breadwinners. Gone. Never to be heard from again.

So, Lord... if you're seeing, if you know, if you've take a note, of what the enemy who's puffed up is doing. Okay Lord, while we wait for you to respond through the enemy, what's my view? How do I live in the midst of this onslaught? You may ask. And the answer will be found in Habakkuk 2:4. The Lord is speaking here saying, "See the enemy is puffed up!" Yes he is! See the needle is shining! Here it is! [holds up an imaginary needle] The enemy's puffed up and his desires are not upright. But, *but*... the Lord says: "The righteous person will live by his faithfulness." What does that mean? "The righteous person will live by faith." "Who is the righteous person?" you may ask. That's a great question. The righteous person whose anchor is God. The person whose anchor is God.

Question: when the storms of life come, what's your anchor? So you have a question. You believe in Jesus, we sung worship songs, you raise your hands, we say we believe in Jesus. When the storms of life come, what's your anchor, dear Christian? What's your anchor? Is it your money? Is it your position? Is it your title? What's your anchor? See, to God, the righteous person, a righteous person is one whose anchor is God. The righteous person trusts God in the darkest of times. And what is trust, you may ask. Trust is this conviction that God's promises will be fulfilled no matter what. The conviction that God's promises will be fulfilled. God is good to his promise. No matter what. So a righteous person is one who trusts God in the darkest of time, he or she will hold on to the conviction that God's promises will be fulfilled no matter what.

Question, dear Christian, what's your fiercest enemy? What's your fiercest enemy? What's your enemy? What's your enemy? What are you trusting God for? What are you wondering—God, what's going on? What's gonna happen here? What's *your* fiercest enemy? You know sometimes we wonder, Lord why did you open the gates? Why did you let the fence down? Why did you open the gates and allow the wolves to come in? Why did you allow the enemy here? This enemy who's so puffed up, and his desires are not upright. And the enemy might be for some of us illness and all you've known for so many years is pain, pain, pain. You don't even know what it's like to live without pain. Or it could be financial pressure, where not because you made poor choices, just because the business went



sideways and now you're in a hole. And you're trying to work your way out of this hole, but the more you tried, the deeper you sink. Because sudden things go wrong, sudden things go wrong, and you're doing your best, but sudden things start going wrong. And you know, you are one paycheque away from the streets. And that's where you are now. The enemy puffed up and the phone is ringing, the bank wants its money, and you don't have it. Some of us here it could be relational issues, relational fractures. So for the dads here, after this I'm sure you probably go to a park or gather in your balcony somewhere, on your deck and you'll be having this barbecue and it'll be wonderful. But maybe your son or daughter might not be there. Or your son or daughter might be there, but you know *that one* [points] not a Christian, and they are militant against the faith.

The enemy is puffing up and his desire not good. And you're wondering, Lord how do I live? And the Lord's response to you is, "Son, daughter, I see...the enemy. Yes, I know...the enemy. I've taken note. But for you, for you, dear son, dear child, trust in me in your darkest time and hold on to the conviction that my promises will ring true. My promises will come to past, no matter what. Trust me. I know you're looking at this needle and it's sharp. And I know you know that when it gets in there it'll hurt, trust me. I am holding the needle! I'm holding the needle, trust me." Are you trusting him? Are you...trusting him? The righteous will live by faith.

### **The Earth Will Be Filled with the Knowledge of the Glory of God**

The second key statement that God will say, "The Earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God". The Earth will be filled with the *knowledge* of the glory of God. Now, you and I both know the world is far from filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. Far from it!

So, I pastored in Scotland, in Britain. That was, by the way, when I was there, I realized my love for haggis. Now, some of you be like "Ew!" I excuse you because you don't know what you don't know. Haggis is awesome. Anyway, beside the point. So I was pastoring there, and I lived in an apartment. And the apartment they call apartments "flats". So I lived in this flat, it was three bedrooms, so I was obviously occupying one bedroom. And so, while I was there, there was a family from Rwanda who now came into Britain, into Scotland, as refugees—and were looking for a place to stay. So they came and stayed with me. So we all lived together in this house. We were African, as African, so we're getting along. We had similar interests and all that stuff. Similar challenges. So, they came and they lived with us.

So while they were staying with me in this little apartment, this "flat", I began asking this gentleman questions regarding Rwanda. It was him, his wife, and their daughter. So I asked him, "Dude. Talk to me. How was Rwanda? I mean you're old enough to have gone through this genocide. And of course, we know the stories of genocides through CNN, and MSNBC and CBC and all that. But talk to me. How was it experientially? You were there..." And this man looked at me and said, "You know, Ezra...I remember the day when we were asleep, and we were woken up in the middle of the night, I don't even know what time it was, and the rebels had attacked our village and surrounded it. They slaughtered everybody. I managed to escape, but they slaughtered everybody—my mom, my dad, my



grandparents, my uncles, my aunts—everybody. Ezra, I am the only surviving member that I know of of my family.” And I looked at this man, “You must be kidding...” “Ezra... I kid you not. Everyone in my village gone. Everyone gone.” “Wow...” The earth will be filled with he knowledge of the glory of God—really?

So this past week, I was privileged enough to be invited to a private party where the African children’s choir, the kids, the orphans from Uganda were around. They did all sorts of concerts and things. And so they were doing one final concert before they leave this coming week. And so I went to this place, myself and a few other people from our church, and were just there to celebrate and to just love on these kids as they sung some wonderful songs. And as the kids sang those songs, I was reminded...I was reminded of many trips—mission trips that I’ve done, and those trips have taken us to orphanages. And I remember I was in a trip in 2004 to Kenya, and we visited an orphanage there. And there were hard stories there. The worst of the stories was, there was this little girl, who was taken, whose mother delivered this child, this girl. And I guess the mom did not have enough money, to care for this girl, and so the mom decided to throw this child in the garbage heap...okay? So the child’s at garbage heap and the wild dogs came and began mauling this child’s face. And the cries of the baby caught the ears of someone who was passing by, who ran and shoot the dogs away and took this child and brought her to the orphanage. My team and I were a mess as we’re just listening to this horror story after horror story after horror story of these kids. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. The world is getting worse and worse and worse.

So how? In what way—How will the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God? When God is saying, “This is what’s gonna happen.” Well...the Lord is not done in answering Habakkuk here. Because he’ll enter from verse six and following to talk about how this will happen. So he will introduce five woes. Five taunts against the wickedness that’s happening around the world. So I’ll give an example of what a woe would be.

So I grew up in Kenya as most of you know. In case you didn’t know...surprise! I grew up in Kenya. So...I lived, we moved around quite a bit. And so there was one time we lived in an apartment, a flat, small flat. And second floor. This is a building, so second floor. And we had the little balcony, it wasn’t too big, not too big. So I was standing in the balcony, and our apartment complex was all fenced with a storm fence. It was high, maybe about 10 feet high, 11 feet high that kind of thing, with barbed wire there, so we were on the second floor. So I could see over the fence. And over the fence there was a river, the Nairobi river, was right in front of us by the parking lots, say. So there we were, and I’m standing in the balcony, which is about 3:45-4:00 o’clock, mom and dad were not back yet from work. So I was there, and I was standing in the balcony, just looking at the river, and looking at the vehicle of the highway past there. And I saw a homeless person who seemed to also have some mental challenges. At least that’s what I saw. I was about 10, 11—I was a brat at the time. Ten, eleven, now I’m good. But back then I was not. So anyways, 10-12 and I’m looking at this guy, so I decided, well I’ll have fun with this guy. So I said, taunting the guy, I’m making <loud voice> “Heyyyy!!! Homeless guy, what’s up? What are you doing? What are you doing over there?” and all that. Just being rude to this man. And my brother heard me. So my older brother come and say, “Ezra. What’s your problem?



Like, just leave the guy alone! What's your problem?" And I'm thinking: Well, I'm on second floor, there's a big fence in front of us, what can the guy do to me? I'm right here.. he's there, we're all good. "Hey!!! <gibberish>". So I'm just being just a jerk basically...to this man.

Now, this homeless guy had a bucket. It was like one of these, five gallon paint buckets. It was filthy. And it was picking all this junk and putting it in the bucket. So he decides he will empty the contents of the bucket. And then he hurls this thing toward the house! And now these are the moments when everything goes slow motion. So you can see the bucket come, [motioning bucket slowly flying] and my eyes got bigger—I guess that's when I realized I got big eyes—so the bucket is coming and it's coming. Now his aim was not good. So the bucket is coming, and I'm seeing this bucket flying in the air, and my dad's bedroom was on this side of the building. So I'm seeing the bucket come, I'm looking at the window, the bucket is coming, window, bucket—they both meet [smashes hands together]. And the bucket smashes the glass and falls onto my dad's bed. Oh...my. My brother runs to the balcony, "What happened? What happened?" And he looks at the window and he goes to my parents' room and he sees the bucket on dad's bed! And my brother comes out, and he sees me, and I'm right there... like shaking [shaking], like this is the near death experience for me. And in Africa when something bad happens, we kind of put our hands on our heads [put hands on his head]. So my brother comes like this [hands on head], and I'm just like, there, not knowing what to do. And he said, "Ezra! Ezra you're dead!" [hands on head] Right there...my brother would have said, "Ezra....woe to you for what you just—When Dad comes home, you will sing. And it will not be "Kumbaya".... you will sing, son! Woe to you, Ezra!"

What does woe mean? By the way Jesus uses this word "woe" so many times. Jesus uses the word "woe" more than anyone else in the scripture. When he says "woe", when the scripture say "woe", when you read that word "woe", what does it mean? "Woe" means, it's a very strong term that is associated with either a warning or God's judgment that is coming. It's a warning, God's judgement is coming and it's meant to evoke this emotion, extreme emotions such as grief and sorrow and regret and anguish. But it's not just grief, sorry, regret, and anguish. It's an intense version of these emotions. An intense version. So in other words, it's not just grief, it's overwhelming grief. Not just anguish, it's overwhelming anguish here. So with that in mind, this is what God says in response to this enemy who's puffed up. God says this, Habakkuk 2:6,

"Woe to him who piles up stolen goods  
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!"

Habakkuk 2:9,

"Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain,  
setting his nest on high  
to escape the clutches of ruin!"

Habakkuk 2:12,



“Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed  
and establishes a town by injustice!”

Habakkuk 2:15,

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors,  
pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk,  
so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!”

Habakkuk 2:19,

“Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’  
Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’  
Can it give guidance?  
It is covered with gold and silver;  
there is no breath in it.”

Woe, woe, woe, woe. Five times. Woe to the greedy, woe to the one who desires to be dominant at other people's expense, woe to this person who is murderers for financial gain, woe to this drunken debacuherer, woe to this person whose grotesque idolater. Woe, woe, woe to this person.

Let me pause there, and say this: this is not just limited to the Babylonians...right? Let me ask, how many of you know someone who piles up stolen goods to make themselves known wealthy by extortion? How many of you would know someone who would build his house by unjust gain? Unjust gain. How many of you know people who build a city, they establish themselves with bloodshed. And establishes the town, builds their empire through injustice. I'm gonna say bloodshed, yeah...bloodshed. Dare I say, abortion? How many of you know people who give people drink, “Drink! Drink! And get drunk!” So they can have their way with them sexually?” How many of us know people who worship idols, and I don't mean just things that are wooden. Idols could be money, power, sex—things that you would hope would give you joy that only God can give. The Lord would say “woe” to these people, judgment is coming, remember what he says in verse two and three of this chapter. Habakkuk 2:2,

“Write down the revelation  
and make it plain on tablets  
so that a herald may run with it.”

So that people can go and tell others. Habakkuk 2:3,

“For the revelation awaits an appointed time; [So there's a time when this judgment would come.]



it speaks of the end  
and will not prove false.  
Though it lingers, wait for it;"

In other words, yes the judgment of God is not here, "Repent! Repent!" is the message, but just because judgment is not here does not mean it's not coming! It is coming...Why would the Lord bring so much judgment? Because of Habakkuk 2:14,

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea."

It will not always be like this, where orphans will be found in garbage heaps. It will not always be like this, where people are struggling with illnesses that don't get healed. It will not always be like this, where Christians are being persecuted for their faith. It's not always going to be like this. One day the earth will be filled with this intimate experiential knowledge of the presence of God.

By that I mean this, here's a story. Growing up again in Africa, I used to, I was about 7-8 years old. And I would walk from my house to the bus stop to take the bus to go to school and then in the evening the bus would drop me off at that stop, and I would have to walk home. The problem is, on my way to the bus stop, the bus stop was not too close to my house, so I had to do a little bit of a walk. So there was a stretch in my walk. There's a stretch there where there's a bully who was about 18-19 years old, and this guy was always high, always high. I can't remember him ever sober. But he was bigger than me, he was faster than me. So I'd be walking to school, he would call me, flag me and stop me. And I'd have to stop. He'd come, he'd grab my shirt [grabs own shirt] and all that and choke me a little bit, and put his hands in my pocket. And it's one thing to rob me when I'm not there, when you take my stuff, I come home my stuff is gone, my wallet is gone, my stuff is gone. It's another thing for you to violently come, put your hands on me, put your hands in my pocket and take all my lunch money! This is what this guy did. He'd get into my backpack and take my lunch, my snacks for recess! And he did this constantly! If it were not morning, it was evening. And every time I remember walking through that stretch, and I was always looking back, looking back, always scared. This guy would come from the woodwork, and take stuff from me.

Well...There was a time, so I kept crying to my mom and my dad and they'll keep buying me the pencil, keep giving me the lunch money everyday...it was stolen, until my dad said, "Enough! Ezra, from today on, I will walk you to the bus stop and I'll wait for you in the evening and get you home." So day one, we wake up, I get ready for school, I have my lunch, I have my snack money in my pocket, my dad is walking holding my hand. And we come to this stretch, do you think Ezra was looking? [looking around] Was I looking? I was not looking! Why? I have Iron Man right here! I have Superman! My dad could beat your dad! I was not looking around! I had this experiential intimate knowledge of the presence of my dad! My chest was out.



One day...all these things that are beating against us, will be no more. It is very comforting to know, very comforting to know that our suffering has an expiry date attached to it, is it not? It's not always be like this. Because the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. It will be one day!

### **The Lord is in His Temple**

Finally... So, the righteous will live by faith, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, third: God is in his temple. Habakkuk 2:20,

“The Lord is in his holy temple;  
let all the earth be silent before him.”

Now, you know when you read that verse, many of us will just gloss over it, right? You read that verse, “Ah the Lord is in temple, let all the earth be silent before him.” You’re not even paying attention—like, what is it actually saying?

Well this is what this verse says. Now, in Africa in 1982, in Kenya in particular where I grew up, there was a coup. What a coup is, it's when rebels come and they want to take over the government. So, you have this rebel army with all their guns and everything, and they want to take over the government. So they are seeking for the president, the president goes into hiding. And they are busy taking over the major news stations, and the bank, the central bank is taken over by these rebels. Why? Because they want to take authority by force and rule the government. Now during that time, there was a curfew that was imposed, meaning you cannot drive anywhere, all the stores are closed, you stay indoors not a soul should be seen outside, either by the rebels or the military who were trying to take back the power and install the current president. So this went on for two days, so we were worried not knowing what's going to happen. So the TV's were on, but no news, no news at all. Radio on, but no music, nothing! <static sound> Nothing! No news. And the entire community, you just sit by your radio, you let it just be quiet, there are no music, nothing, no kids playing outside. Why? It's a curfew. Everyone indoors. Two days later, suddenly, the TV comes on. It's the president... where is he? He is in his office, at what would be the equivalent to the white house. And he spoke to the nation and he told the nation: “Yes, there were rebels who tried to take power, but we have subdued them. There is peace in the land.”

It's the same thing the president of the United States did when 9/11 happened and the two towers went down, the president of the United States came to the, was seated at the Oval Office in the United States, and he spoke from the Oval Office, reassuring the nation that “Yes, we've been attacked, but we have this under control.”

So when you read Habakkuk 2:20, when the Lord is saying “The Lord is in his holy temple” this means God is in his Oval Office now, and he is saying “Hey, let the world be silent” meaning “Hush now...Be still and know who's in control here. Yes, the needle is here, and it is sharp, and you're scared



because you know that the needle will come in and try and pull this splinter out, and it will hurt. But it's not always going to be this way. Stop wiggling around little child. I am in control."

Dear Christian, I don't know what you're going through. I don't know what cross you're carrying. I don't know what challenges you're facing. But make no mistake, the Lord is sovereign. And yes, the needle might be in his hand. But it is in *his* hand. Trust him with it. Yes, the pain will be there. But there's an expiry date to it. Therefore, be still and know that *he* is God.

Let's pray. So Father, only you would know the challenges and the pains and the struggles that people in this room are having. You know the crosses that we bear. You know the tears that we've cried. And so Father I prayed for that dear sister, or that dear brother, who's in a deep hole—be it financially, relationally, illness, whatever. Father I pray would your grace be sufficient for us. And Lord would you come to our aid and would you come quickly Father. Lord I pray you'd help us to trust you, God. Help us to trust you, help us to know that our sufferings have an expiry date to it. That it will not always be this way. Help us to be still and to know that *you* are God. Command us to not be fearful, Father. In Jesus' name, and God's people say...Amen.