

Thoughts from Habakkuk: From Fear to Faith

(With Related Scriptures)

“The only way to live is to “live by faith.” The world may crumble about our ears. All that we know and love may vanish. ‘But the righteous will live by his faith.’ He will live by faith in the one who keeps us, not only in the moment of our initial belief in Jesus Christ as Savior, but in every later moment of life as well.” – *The Minor Prophets*- James Montgomery Boice, pp. 411, 412.

“Times may be bad. The future may become worse. But the righteous will live by faith in him who alone is worthy of that faith.”-Boice, p. 418.

“Faced with fear, he [Habakkuk] reminds himself of what he knows. He knows that he worships a mighty God, and he remembers the powerful acts of God in past days. A God like that is a joy forever. Remembering God restores his joy and brings him victory over fear of the future.”-Boice, p. 429

Isaiah 26:3-4, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength..."

In this passage the expression translated “perfect peace” is literally *shalom, shalom* or “peace, peace.!” This word, *shalom*, is a very rich word. It includes the ideas of “wholeness; fullness of well-being.”

Psalms 112:7-8, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD. His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies."

Psalms 56:3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

Psalms 56:11, "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me."

Romans 15:13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." The Greek word translated “abound” has the meaning of “superabound, be in excess, have in abundance, exceed.”

“What is it that makes this chapter [three], and particularly the final verses, so forceful? In my judgment it is the courageous way in which Habakkuk embraces all the calamities he can imagine and nevertheless triumphs over them in the knowledge and love of his Savior.”-Boice, p. 433.

“Faith is the ability to feel so sure of God, that, no matter how dark the day, there is no doubt as to the outcome. For God’s people there is a GLORIOUS FUTURE. It may be a

long way off. But it is absolutely sure. Thus, in the midst of his gloom and despair, Habakkuk was an optimist of the first magnitude.” *Halley’s Bible Handbook*, p. 373.

Philippians 4:6-7, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The word translated “careful” here is *merimnao*, and it means “to be anxious, distracted.” It has the idea of being pulled in several different directions. The secret to peace, according to this passage, is constant prayer, which includes thanksgiving. This peace is amazing in that it passes all understanding. And this peace keeps or literally “guards” our hearts and minds.

This word *merimnao* is used five times in Matthew 6: 25-34, where the Lord specifically exhorts us to not be anxious about material blessings.

“Fear corrodes our confidence in God’s goodness. We begin to wonder if love lives in heaven. If God can sleep in our storms, if his eyes stay shut when our eyes grow wide, if he permits storms after we get on his boat, does he care/ Fear unleashes a swarm of doubts, anger-stirring doubts.”-*Imagine Your Life Without Fear*-Max Lucado, p. 20.

“Fear creates a form of spiritual amnesia. It dulls our miracle memory. It makes us forget what Jesus has done and how good God is.”-Lucado, p.22.

“Fear may fill our world, but it doesn’t have to fill our hearts.”-Lucado, p. 26.

2 Timothy 1:7-8, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God..."

The word translated “fear” here is *deilia*. This word means “cowardice or timidity.” This does not come from God but from our sinful natures and is a formidable weapon that Satan can use against us. The antidote to this is “power, love and a sound mind.” This is speaking about the power of God in us, activated by the Holy Spirit. This is referred to in Micah 3:8, "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD..." It is written in 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." The word translated “sound mind” is *sophonismos* and means “disciplined or self-controlled.” When in a fearful situation we must not allow our minds to run out of control, but must discipline them by God’s word.

To encourage us in our troubles let us take note of these words written by William Cowper several hundred years ago:

The saints should never be dismayed,
Nor sink in hopeless fear;

For when they least expect His aid,
The Savior will appear.

This Abr'am found: he raised the knife;
God saw, and said, "Forbear!
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;
Behold the victim there."

Once David seemed Saul's certain prey;
But hark! the foe's at hand;
Saul turns his arms another way,
To save th'invaded land.

When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
He thought to rise no more;
But God prepared a fish to save,
And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine,
That meet us in His Word!
May every deep felt care of mine
Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for His seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait:
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late.