

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Honest With God

PART

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TITLE

When Injustice Abounds

SCRIPTURE

Habakkuk 1:1-11



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Well, it's so good to see you Providence family, and to all of our guests, welcome. We are thrilled that you are here, that you have joined us. About 10 years ago, I was at home, and I was alone. I thought, "I should watch the evening news." That experience was very much like what would take place if I watched last night or even, really, any night, almost any morning. What we would find is there just a litany of brokenness and injustice and evil that just courses across the world and our country. That night, there was all these stories about fraud and there was all these stories about crime and violence and terrorism. In fact, this slide with all these shots is just a sampling of what was taking place 10 years ago, and it's still taking place today. There's abuse. There's violence. There's terrorism. There's looting. There's riots. There's brokenness in the world.

As I was watching this, for some reason that night, it became so memorable. It's because instead of the stories becoming the story that I remembered that night, it was the broadcasters. It was these reporters and how they reported it that, to me, became the story. For the first time in my life, I could remember my eyes being open to the fact that they're able to relay this information without a trace of sympathy or shock. At the end of 30 minutes or an hour of just relaying the brokenness that literally is laced throughout the entire country, there's no mention of, "You know what we should do right now? We should all get on our hands and knees and let's pray to God for help." Yet, that should be the response of every believer whenever we watch the news because you just have been confronted with the reality of the world. That night, not only was it the brokenness in the world, but it was our response as human beings to that brokenness to where it was almost acceptable. It was explainable. It happens all the time. This is simply how we respond to things. We just go about living in a world of injustice without concern about praying to God who has the power to fix such things.

I remember that night I took that power wand and I threw it into the couch. It was sitting next to me, and I just began to pray. My prayer was very similar to what we're going to read here. I just said, "God, how can you allow this to take place? What are you doing? Why is this taking place? What is the solution? What's going to take place now in the world in order to right all of this wrong?" It's interesting that this was a time in my life, 10 years ago, that God opened up his word to me in Habakkuk. If you brought a Bible, if you want to turn there. There's a lot of us in the room who have never been asked to turn to Habakkuk, and so it may take you a little bit of time. At the very front of your Bible, you're going to find a brief list of all the books and the page in your Bible where they start. You can head there if you need some help. It's not the easiest book in the Bible to find. This is really sad. It's sad that we're not so familiar with its contents. The reason is because every single day we echo his sentiments, his thoughts, and his prayers.

What we find in this amazing little book is a real prophet, a prophet who takes with absolute honesty his concerns to God. He says, "This is what I see in the world. This is the evil and injustice that I see in the world. What puzzles me is not that there's brokenness in the world because I'm broken. What puzzles me is your allowance of this brokenness and injustice and evil in the world." It's penetrating. It's honest. What we're going to find over this month is that the applications are absolutely contemporary 2500 years later. What's stunning about the book and why we need to look at it so carefully is not simply because we find a man in history who talks to God like we talk to God or wish we could.

We find God answering the prophet Habakkuk with similar honesty. He would speak these things to us. You see Romans chapter 15 verse four, it says, “Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction,” yours, mine, “that through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope.” That means that Habakkuk was recorded and preserves for 2500 years, and it sits in your lap because God wants to encourage you with the things that are similar about his day and our day. Our uncertainties and our frailties, our angst and anxieties, it’s all there for us.

Let me pray for us as we get started. Father in heaven, we come to you. We thank you for raising up Habakkuk. We thank you, God, for inclining his heart to write down his thoughts, even his private prayers to you. Thank you, by your Spirit, that you have preserved it through the generations so that we have a copy. We thank you, Father, for how gritty it actually is. We thank you that it shows us how you respond to real people just like us. Would you give to us the amazing ability to believe what we read, the courage to apply it to our life, the humility to apply it with meekness? Would you, God, correct our way wherever we are off? We look to you in faith now and we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

In my Bible, this starts on page 876. The only way for us to really appreciate what he’s about to say is to understand what he has said now for 876 pages. Let me give you a really brief macro level of what comes before this. The Bible begins that God creates. He creates the world, and he creates man and woman in his image for us to have a relationship with him. The man and woman sin against God. They break fellowship with God. They separate from him. They sever that relationship because they chose to believe that they had a better path and a better plan than God. It was a tremendous insult to the creator of the universe who emphasizes his generosity to us for the first two and a half chapters. Instead of crushing us for our rebellion, God made a promise to rescue us and to reconcile us to him.

A few pages later, he comes to a man who’s living in the city of Ur, who’s bowing down to rocks. He has the inclination because he’s created in the image of God to worship, but he doesn’t know who to worship because he doesn’t know God. He looks around and Ur is just full of rocks. He says, “I’ll pray to one of these.” He’s bowing down to idols and rocks. God comes to Abram, and he says, “Get up. I want you to leave. I want you to leave this place. I’m going to bless you. I’m going to make you into a great nation. From that nation, from that people, you have no descendants right now. You have no children right now. You have a wife, and you’re older. You’re 75 years old. From you, from your descendants, we’re going to raise up a nation called Israel. From that nation will come the rescuer who’s going to bring people back into a right relationship with God.”

It’s a remarkable thing that this people was built to be a holy people. They were supposed to be different. God gave them a law. He gave them festivals, feasts. He gave them a Sabbath day of rest that was supposed to separate them to make them look different from other people so other people would go, “Why are you so different? Why do you look so rested?”

Israel was a moral train wreck. They gave themselves over to rebellion and idolatry and immorality to where even after God revealed himself to them, they began to bow down once again to stones, thinking this is God because they turned their back on the one true God. They said, "We want to be like all the other nations. We want a king." God says, "I'm your king." They said, "Not good enough. We want a human king." They were like all the rest. God says, "I relent."

He gives them Saul, who's a disaster. Next came David, a little bit better. He has some significant character flaws, but he at least loved God. God gave him several promises that actually relayed to becoming rescuer. It's amazing mercy. He dies and Solomon, his son, becomes king. He starts well and he ends really, really poor. His sons come, and they can't figure out how to get along, so they divide the one country into two countries, the north and the south. The north, it simply doesn't last that long. The south lasts a little bit longer. It's Judah. That's where Habakkuk is a prophet. Well, generation after generation come and go, most of which had very, very evil kings until we get to an eight-year-old boy named Josiah. Eight years old, he's still wearing PJs and playing with his Moses action figure. An eight-year-old is the king of God's people on the earth, but he has a heart for God. God gives him this amazing inclination to look to him and says, "There's something about God."

Eight years pass, and he says, "You know what we need to do? We need to reopen the temple. We need to clean things up a little bit. We need to start worshiping God." They open up the temple, they start cleaning it, and they find a copy of God's word. They didn't have one. No one was reading it. He hears it. He begins to weep. He says, "The people have to hear this." Suddenly, there is a national revival. Imagine every sphere of our culture in America from government to education to the arts to entertainment to the marketplace all at the same time bowing down and saying, "We must repent of our sin. We must look to God." Can you imagine? Habakkuk saw that happen. As a prophet, he had been praying for this. Now, all of a sudden, he sees it happening with his own eyes. God has done this. It's created this expectation that things are finally going to get better in the world.

This time, there's three super powers in the world. There's Assyria. They're the king of the hill. There's Egypt. They're on their way down. There's Babylon or the Chaldeans, we're going to read about here, and they're on their way up. Judah wasn't one of the three. Judah was more like Rhode Island. It was sort of small. Nothing against those of you who are from Rhode Island, but you're not the most threatening place in the whole world. Little Rhode Island. Well, Pharaoh one day writes a letter to King Josiah, and he says, "I want to take my army through your country. We're going to go up to Assyria." We're not even told why he wanted to do that. Josiah refused because nobody's going to tell Rhode Island what to do, and so they go to war. Josiah, instead of sitting up on a horse up on a hill going, "Flank to the right and flank to the left," no, he actually surprises everybody, and he goes down into the battle and he gets killed.

His sons ascend to the throne, and they're absolute moral train wrecks. They actually reform all of Josiah's reformation, and they go back to idolatry. They lead the people back into idolatry. Habakkuk, now he's there. He's begged for revival. He's seen it with his own eyes. Now, he sees things unraveling before his idols. He's absolutely tore up about it. He says, the oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw, verse two, "O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you, 'Violence,' and you will not save? Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. The law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted." Does this sound familiar?

Verse five, God speaks. He actually answers Habakkuk. He says, "Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans," the Babylonians, "that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. They are dreaded and fearsome; their justice and dignity go forth from themselves. Their horses are swifter than leopards, more fierce than the evening wolves; their horsemen press proudly on. Their horsemen come from afar; they fly like an eagle swift to devour. They all come for violence, all their faces forward. They gather captives like sand. At kings they scoff, and at rulers they laugh. They laugh at every fortress, for they pile up earth and take it. Then they sweep by like the wind and go on, guilty men, whose own might is their god."

What do we learn from this? I'll just tell you this is really just the opening scene. If I had more time, then I would keep reading, but I don't have more time. I hardly have time to say what I want to say today. What do we learn from this? Really, three things, then we're going to take the Lord's Supper. This is important for every one of us. Listen to me. First of all is this, is that our righteous anger should lead us to pray when injustice abounds. You notice there, there's an assumption that we have righteous anger. Then, once we have it, we're supposed to leverage it in one particular direction. You see, what we see in our day Habakkuk saw in his. He says in verse three and four that he sees destruction, he sees violence, he sees injustice. It says the law is paralyzed. It's handcuffed. It's shackled so that people are now lawless. They're doing anything that they see fit in their own eyes. He's looking around and instead of growing apathetic and cold to what he sees, he grows angry. He's disturbed.

You see, there are times when it is absolutely right to get angry and absolutely wrong not to. Ephesians chapter four verse 26, there's an imperative. He tells us as believers, "Be angry, and do not sin." He's not saying live a life of anger, like let that be the characteristic of your life. What he's saying is this, then when you see things that are right and they're wrong, you're supposed to have the impulse of righteous indignation. The reason is because that's how God is. Psalm chapter seven verse 11 says, "God is a righteous judge, a God who feels indignation every day." You see, anger is simply the protective arm of love. Some of you may say, "I don't want to worship a God who has anger." Listen, if he has no anger, he also has no love.

Anger is the right arm of love. It's the protective arm of love. That's why if your kids, if you have children or a parent or a friend, and they are mistreated and you love them, anger swells up within your heart in a different way than if my friends or my parents or my children were mistreated. There is always a link between our anger and our love. It's kind a puppy that has a leash. When you have anger in your heart, it's connected to something that you love. Some of us watched some football yesterday. There was a bad call. Depending on which team you loved, you responded differently to that call. This is exactly what is taking place with God. He loves perfectly, and he feels anger when what he loves is threatened, and so it is with God's people if we're walking with him. When God's things, when God's people, when people created in his image, when the dignity of life, marriage, family, culture, creation, when things that he loves, he created, and they're mistreated, we're supposed to feel a righteous anger swell within our heart. Yet, we're not supposed to sin with that anger.

That anger is a fuel. It causes us to do something. This is important. When we get angry, it's suddenly like somebody is just strapped us to a rocket. We're ready to move somewhere right now. This is where Habakkuk's at. You see, he didn't take all that anger and go burn down his pharmacy. He didn't take all that anger and post a half-baked rant on social media. He didn't go out and hurt other people. No, he went to the source of power itself, and that is the sovereign God of the universe. He prayed, even a sloppy prayer, but he prayed. You say, "What do you mean, sloppy?" Well, this is not the most savory of all prayers. Notice what he says. The first question is this, "How long must I pray before you act?" In verse two. He says, "I keep praying, and I keep preaching, and I don't see you doing anything."

You get to the second question in verse three. He says, "Why must I see so much evil? God, why do you keep making me see this train wreck? Why do I have to keep watching this immoral landslide just sweep across the country? I don't want to see it anymore." He gets to the last one. The last question is, "Why do you passively watch all this evil? You just sit there idle. Come on. Snap to it. Get up. Do something. Why are you sitting there when all of this is happening? I see it. I know you see it." I want you to notice a few things. The first thing is that he didn't become a deist. A deist believes that God is simply not near. There is a God. There's a lot of people who think of this theology like a watchmaker, of a really fine watch that's meticulous.

There's no way that a big bang can just create the pieces of the watch to work the way the watch does, and yet God has wound up this watch called the earth, and he's gone on vacation because I don't know why he's gone. If he was near, he would certainly do something. What you find is this. Most deists, they have a theology that fits a mouse trying to protect a lion. They have to defend God himself because they think if God who's good and loving and kind and sovereign, if he saw all of this, he would surely act, but the fact is he's not acting, so he must be on vacation somewhere. God says, "Let me just tell you, I am sovereign and I'm near." He also didn't become an atheist. We'll look at this next week. He's not done praying. We're going to go one step deeper next week as it gets a little bit more intense. He doesn't become an atheist and say, "Well, look. If this is the case, I just don't even believe you're there." There's no atheist in the book of Habakkuk.

In order to become a humanist, and you're going to think that this is a joke or something like that, but it really is not a joke, a humanist is someone that says, "I'm the solution." He didn't make t-shirts. This is not a joke, so don't laugh. He didn't make t-shirts that say, "Let's make Israel great again." We can fix this thing. God's not here. We have the power. Let's organize. Let's do this. Let's be as rude and mean as possible, so long as we get to the best end. That's not what he did. What did he do? He took his prayer, his unrefined righteous indignation. He says, "God, I'm coming to you. It's not refined. It's not well-put together. It's not well-constructed. I'm just going to drop it all. This is everything. It's just going to spew out. I'm coming to you." You see, he believed that God was good and personal and holy and just and sovereign and near, and he believed that God would hear. The first thing we learn is that our righteous anger should lead us to pray when injustice abounds.

The second thing is this. Our loving God hears our prayers when we are unbound. Now, we don't have a verse about this, but we do have verse five where he responds. We know that he's hearing because he's responding to the prophet Habakkuk. God heard his prayer even though it was unsavory. Some of you go, "Well, sure. He's Habakkuk. He's got a book of the Bible in his own name. He's a prophet of God. Of course God hears him, but he doesn't hear me. My name is Bill," or, "My name is Sally. I pray and it goes nowhere." That's simply not the case. What we find within scripture is tons of examples, let me give you one, that God hears your prayer. You remember I said about God came to Abraham. His name is Abraham. He said, "Look, I'm going to bless you. You're going to have a son." He's 75 years old. He waits 11 years. There's still no son.

He has a birthday, and so his wife, Sarah, comes, "I don't know how we're going to do this, but happy birthday. Here's my servant Hagar. Why don't you sleep with her, have a baby, and let's work it out this way?" Now, there's a whole lot of details about that situation. I'm not even going to go in because I don't understand, but what I do know is Abraham goes, "Sounds like a plan." She gets pregnant. They have a son, Ishmael. God comes and he goes, "Great plan, just not mine. That's your solution, but that's not my solution. You will still have a son. I'm going to orchestrate things so that you can receive none of the glory and I will receive all of the glory." He waits until he's 99 years old. Romans four says his body is as good as dead. He goes, "Now's the time." Sarah gets pregnant. They have a son. His name is Isaac. Isaac and Ishmael become rivals. They still are to this day.

Sarah gets jealous, says, "Wait. There's only one person around here and there's only one son of the promise. Abraham, I want you to kick him out." He gives them a Nalgene of some water and some bread and says, "You're out of here," kicks them out into the desert. It's a death sentence. Hagar takes the child, Ishmael, not the son of the promise, but still important because he's an image bearer of God. Don't ever forget that. This is what the Bible says. "When the water in the skin was gone, she put the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off." Hungry kids scream like crazy. She couldn't take it anymore, and so she just puts him under a bush and says, "I got to go over here."

“She lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard.” Two people weeping in the middle of nowhere and God heard them. See, the Bible characters are there to show us how God operates. This book is so gritty. It’s gritty because God wants you to know that he cares about your gritty life. He hears your gritty prayers, and he responds in his perfect time. He hears when we are unbound.

The third thing we learn here is that our sovereign God orchestrates the world to accomplish his will. God comes to Habakkuk, and what he says actually unnerves Habakkuk even more. He says, “Oh, you think I’m idle. I’m not idle. I’m doing something. I’m going to tell you what it is, but it’s so amazing and it’s so perplexing to you that you’re not even going to be able to believe it or understand it. This is what I’m doing. I, with my right arm, am raising up the Chaldeans, the Babylonians. They’re swift, and they’re proud, and they’re fierce, and they’re bloodthirsty, and they worship their own might.” We’re going to look next week that Habakkuk goes, “That’s not a good plan.” See, he comes to God, and he says, “I’m fed up with all the evil. Now you’re telling me that you’re going to sort out our evil by bringing a nation that’s more evil than us to conquer and exile us?” God says, “Yes, that’s what I’m going to do.”

I want you to listen to this very carefully, in particular those who are given to Fox News. I watch some Fox News too. It’s good to watch all of them just to balance things out, but let me tell you something. This is very important you understand this. God is not trying to create heaven on earth. He is trying to rescue people from earth. When you freak out on Tuesday and you feel whatever righteous anger you have, you take that anger to the creator of the universe, and he’s going to take you. He’s going to say, “This is what I’m doing in the world. This is part of my sovereign plan in the world.” What is his mission? He tells us in Habakkuk 2:14, he says, “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” God wants the glory of Jesus Christ be known from sea to sea and everything is at his disposal to do so.

Daniel chapter two, he says this, “I raise kings up, and I take kings down.” Now I want you to think about what we now know that Habakkuk didn’t know now that we’re 2500 years later. Babylon was raised up. They did come in to Israel. They conquered them, exiled them, and the Jews who were called to be missionaries on the earth to display his glory, who were all huddled around their special land, not telling anyone about God, they’re dispersed throughout the empire. You know what they did when they got there? They built synagogues, places where they could worship. Then, there was all these God-fearing Gentiles. They’re like, “Hey, what’s that thing?” “That’s a synagogue.” “What do you teach?” They become more sensitive to some of the realities that there is a creator. We’re not just worshiping rocks.

You know what happened then? The Greeks, God took down the Babylonians, and he raised up the Greeks. What did the Greeks do? They globalized language. They said, “You know what we’re going to do? We’re going to all learn Greek.” When somebody writes a book, say in Greek, everyone will be able to read it. You know what the New Testament was written in?

Greek. God says, “All right. You’ve done a great job in the world history of my mission. Now I’m going to take you down and Rome, I’m going to raise them up.” What did Rome do? Conquered the whole world and then built all these amazing roads, roads that went to all the towns and all the villages so that when Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth and he died on a cross, he was buried in a grave, he rose from the dead, and he tells his disciples, “If you believe in me, I will forgive you of your sin. Now, go tell the world this news.”

There were people dispersed all around the empire that once they got there, because the roads were so good, they all spoke the same language in Greek, that they could get to these people. All these God-fearing Gentiles, this is what we find within history and in Acts, it wasn’t the Jews and it wasn’t the secular Gentiles, it was the God-fearing Gentiles that lived near the synagogues, they were the first to be responsive to the gospel. They then took it farther on all these roads. Here’s what God’s doing. He’s saying, “Look, I have a plan. My plan is not to make your country so great. It’s to use everything at my disposal to glorify my Son. I’ll raise some up, and they’re going to teach everybody a language. I’m going to raise another one up. They’re going to make some really cool roads.” It’s because of God’s sovereign plan that the gospel went so fast and so far when he rose from the dead. He’s sovereign. Providence, we are not deists. All the pain and all the injustice, we believe he’s here and he’s still working in the midst of all of it. What do we do with this?

The first thing, application, is this. It’s let’s examine the source and solutions of our anger. I know that when we look at things and they’re all broken, we get angry. We feel like our anger is so important, but you need to remember your anger is only the symptom. It’s not the source. A wise believer will understand. They’ll ask these questions, “Why am I angry? What is the big thing that I am defending right now? Am I angry because God is violated or because my selfishness is violated?” When you are angry, figure out why. Then, the second thing is we need to look at the solutions, meaning what are we going to put that anger towards? You need to ask this, “Am I pouring my anger out upon cheap outlets that are already overcrowded like Facebook or to the sovereign God of the universe who hears my prayers and has the power to change things?” We need to examine our anger. We should have it, and it should be rightly directed.

The second thing, application, is let’s pray for justice and mercy. When we see injustice, we are supposed to pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. One of the things I want you to know, we’re going to do this right now, I ask you to do this one time, and I realize that it’s going to be hard. If you physically can’t do this, then sit right where you’re at. You can pray whether you’re kneeling or not, but today happens to be a day throughout the world where churches around the world pray for brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted. I want you to just notice, just see a few stats of realities that are happening today. They’re some of the most, to me, some of the most unjust things that are happening in the world.

Just look at this slide. Every month in 2018, that’s right now, this month, November. We just started a month. This month, there will be 255 Christians killed for their faith in Jesus Christ, 104 Christians will be abducted, 66 churches will be attacked, and 160 Christians will be imprisoned without trial. Now, let me ask you something.

Have you ever been angry about this? If not, why? Where is the righteous indignation within the family of God, that other members of the family can be treated like this and we don't respond? No. Hebrews chapter 13 verse three says, "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you are also in the body."

The next slide I want to show you is 20. This is from Open Doors. You can go to OpenDoors.com, and you can find the 20 most persecuted countries in the world if you are a believer. This is what I want you to do right now. I want you to just identify one of them. Nearly everyone is going to look at North Korea because they're the first one, but let's try to spread it out a little bit, just randomly choose one. This is what I want you to do right now. If physically able, I want to ask you to get on your knees on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and I want you to pray for those believers in that country right now who are in prison or family members who have lost a loved one because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, as a church family, we bow our hearts to you. We do thank you for the freedoms that we enjoy, and yet it breaks our heart that many of our brothers and sisters in our own family will lose freedoms, liberties, possessions, family members, and, some, even their own life singing and declaring the very things that we sing and declare and believe. We ask, God, that you would be merciful to them. Would you help them to endure? Would you give them grace upon grace? Would you strengthen their hands? Would you comfort those who are bereaved? Would you keep warm those whose roof or coat has been taken from them? Would you be gracious to them? Would you make your face to shine upon them?

We pray, Father, that you would help to endure, that you would give them courage. I pray even now, Lord, for the churches in these countries as they are perhaps gathered in basements or in caves or under trees, in homes. They have some not able to sing out loud for fear of being arrested. I pray, Father, that you would bless them with your presence. Give them strength and endurance in their faith in Jesus Christ. We thank you for the privilege to remember them today. We pray, Lord, that them, as well as all the other injustices in the world, we bring our concern to you. We know you have the power. We ask, God, that you would act, that you would do a miracle and bring blessing out of such burden. We know you can do it because of Jesus. We pray it in his name. Amen. Amen.

Well, thank you so much for praying. We're going to take the Lord's Supper in just a moment, but I want to share one more thing. In fact, those who are here, those who will be serving, if you want to go ahead and stand and head back to the back as we get ready for the Lord's Supper. Even before we do, there's one other point I want you to see. It's a very important point of application. It really gives us hope for the injustices that we feel. It's simply this. Let's look to Jesus for hope. You might say, "Well, that sounds trite. After all of that, you come up with let's look to Jesus for hope?" I want you to think about this just for a moment. In verse five, God comes to Habakkuk, and he says, "I hear your prayer. I'm about to do something that you're not even going to believe."

Well, another person quoted him, and it was the apostle Paul after Jesus rose from the dead. He's preaching in the book of Acts, in chapter 13, and this is what Paul says. He says, "Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the prophets should come about. For I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you." The apostle Paul quotes God in Habakkuk 1:5 as he's sharing about Jesus. Now, why does he do that? Because Jesus is the ultimate example of God's ability to bring salvation out of judgment, blessing out of suffering. Jesus went to a cross to pay for our sin. There were people who were standing at the foot of the cross looking up and asking, "God, what good can you bring from this injustice?" Here's the good. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and he gave salvation to all, and it would not have happened if God not leveraged the injustice in the world towards his sovereign saving ends. He's given us the gift to remember his sovereign workings. It's called the Lord's Supper.

He told us to take it, this bread and this cup, the symbols of his body and blood. He tells us to remember the cross, and he tells us to confess our faith. If you have not trusted Christ, we ask you to let these things pass, but if you have trusted Christ, this is for you. We welcome you to take it. Let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we love you, and we thank you that you have the power to do amazing things like saving us from our sin, even through disobedient sinners acting unjustly toward your Son. We thank you that you have the power. We know that if you could do that in Jesus' life and through his life and through his death and resurrection, that you can taken even the things that we see and feel that are evil and unjust and you can bring about good ends for them. I pray that as we take the Lord's Supper that you would help us to remember what you did and proclaim our faith in who [inaudible]. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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