

Prayer's Delays

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Habakkuk 1:1-3:19.
- B. Many of us feel helpless when we encounter some disaster that we cannot control.
- C. Habakkuk protests at what seems to be the indifference of God.

II. God's response: I am raising up the Chaldeans.

- A. The answer was unexpected—one of the most difficult problems we face is when God is apparently inactive. The Chaldeans were being raised to judge the Jews.
- B. Habakkuk is amazed at God's inconsistency—how could God use a less righteous country to punish a righteous country?
 - 1. We cannot choose the scene of our own martyrdom.
 - 2. God is showing Habakkuk that the problem is much worse than he thought.

III. Habakkuk's response: he waits for God to give him understanding.

- A. The problem is not God in our lack of understanding—it is us.
- B. We are to ask, seek and know to see what God is going to do.
- C. God answers us in His word, to our spirits and in our circumstances.

IV. God's response: wait.

- A. One of the hardest things to gain is patience—we must often wait upon God.
- B. Delays are not denials.
- C. The righteous shall live by faith. (Habakkuk 2:4)
 - 1. This is one of the most important verses in the Bible. (Romans, Galatians, Hebrews)
 - 2. We are made right by what we believe.
 - 3. The soul that is puffed up will fail.

V. Habakkuk's response of faith.

- A. Habakkuk's cry resembles Jesus' cry in Gethsemane: free me from this trouble, but in the end let Your will be done over mine.

B. Habakkuk rejoices in God regardless of the trouble ahead.

Application questions:

1. When have you faced disappointing answers to your prayers? What was your response to God?

2. Why is faith so critical when we face difficult times?

3. How can you best demonstrate your Christian faith when you face seemingly insurmountable challenges? Who has modeled this for you in your own life? Explain.
