

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 15 Aug 2021

Sermon Title : 1 Resolution

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Habakkuk 3:1-19

INTRODUCTION

When we peel off the many layers of leaves of an onion we will get to the “core” at the centre which is a bud that consists of layers of new young leaves. People are like that too. We have different fronts or sides and we are different things to different people. We go through life with all these things in front of us, protecting us; we are fine, not depressed or lonely etc. But the moment we hit some tough situations, and we experience all this comfort, appearance and confidence being stripped or peeled off, we will then be at our “core”, and realize who we really are at the centre; who we truly are inside as children of God.

King David's Resolution in Psalm 34

Context of Psalm 34:

King David was a man after God's heart and God used him powerfully for Israel. Before he became king, he had killed Goliath and was a hero in Israel. This made king Saul envious of his success and David had to flee from his own people and kingdom to seek refuge in Gath, a Philistine territory, because his own king whom he had served was after his life. (1 Samuel 21:10)

When David approached king Achish aka Abimelech, the king of Gath, his soldiers recognized David as their enemy from Israel. They began to look for an opportunity to also take his life. Fearing for his life, David sought wisdom from God and pretended to be mad before the king. Achish then sent David away as he did not want another mad man around him (since mad persons were believed to have evil spirits in them in those days). And so David escaped. (1 Samuel 21:11-15)

- David wrote Psalm 34 when he feigned madness to escape from Abimelech

In Psalm 34, David resolved to:

- Bless the Lord at all times with God's praise continually in his mouth. (Psalm 34:1) David made this intentional resolution in the midst of being pursued for his life by his people and king, and having to feign madness by being unkempt and doing crazy things to escape from his enemy.

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- Boast in God, not himself – The humble rejoices in the Lord. (Psalm 34:2)
Habakkuk 2:4 compares the proud who boasts about himself, is puffed up and not upright with the humble who boasts in the Lord, trusts in Him and is always in faith; it is the humble who is in the Lord.
- David also called for his men to magnify the Lord with him, to exalt God's name together because he sought the Lord, and God answered him and delivered him from all his fears. (Psalm 34:3-4)

Background of Habakkuk

As covered in the previous 2 sermons, Judah had turned away from God in the time of Habakkuk's prophesy. So God raised up the Babylonians to punish Judah. The prophet Habakkuk raised questions and complaints towards God about the dreadful event facing Judah and God revealed to him that there would come a day when God would also bring punishment upon the wicked Babylonians according to His appointed time:

- a) Habakkuk 1:1-11 (Sermon on 1st Aug entitled '3 Whats')
 - (i) 'What are You waiting for?' (1:2)
 - (ii) 'What are You doing about it?' (1:3-4)
 - (iii) 'What?!' (1:5-11) – Habakkuk's reaction when God responded to his first 2 'Whats' by revealing His plan of raising a cruel and vicious people who were guilty transgressors, whose god were their own might and strength, to attack Judah.
- a) Habakkuk 1:12-2:20 (Sermon on 8th Aug entitled '2 Sides')
 - (i) Habakkuk 'waters' by focusing on the attributes of God (1:12)
 - (ii) Habakkuk voices out his frustrations to God (1:13)
 - (iii) Habakkuk continues 'watering' despite his frustration (2:1)
 - (iv) God's plan will come at the appointed time (2:2-3)
 - (v) The righteous shall live by his faith (2:4)

Habakkuk's Prayer/Psalm of Praise to God (Habakkuk 3:1-19)

Habakkuk's questions and complaints to God in Habakkuk 1-2 ended in a prayer/psalm of praise to God in Habakkuk 3:1-19:

Habakkuk pleads for God's mercy (3:1-2) – This prayer is meant to be sung

- Habakkuk remembers God's amazing works. Now, in times of deep need, he pleads for God's help and mercy even in God's anger.

Habakkuk recounts God's power (3:3-15)

- He recounts God's awesome deeds and exploits in leading Israel out of Egypt through the lands in the south into the Promised Land. (3:3-7)

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- He talks about how powerful God is; all nature and creation cannot stand before God. (3:8-11)
- He talks about how the Almighty God is like a mighty warrior, who personally brings salvation and deliverance to His people. (3:12-15)

Habakkuk's fear (3:16)

- He trembled when he heard what God was about to bring upon Judah. His lips quivered with fear, his legs gave way, and he shook in terror because Judah was going to suffer greatly. (3:16a)
- Yet he would wait quietly for the coming days when disaster would strike the Babylonians. (3:16b)

This is because Habakkuk did not know how long they had to wait till the Babylonians would be punished or what kinds of suffering or how much Judah would go through.

Habakkuk's 1 Resolution (3:17-18)

*“Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines,
Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food,
Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls,
Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.”*
(Habakkuk 3:17-18, NASB 1995)

- He will exult in the Lord despite the 3 “*thoughts*” and “*ands*” which mean there will be no fruits, no harvest, no cattles or livestock as food for them.
- He will rejoice in the God of his salvation.

This is the core of Habakkuk when all the layers are peeled away: “Yet I will”

The Lord God is my strength (3:19a)

- When we make that one resolution to exult in the Lord, God will give us the strength and make us walk in high places.

This is not just Habakkuk's personal psalm to God, but it is for the entire kingdom of Judah, to be sung constantly during its exile. (3:19b)

CONCLUSION

We can go to the Lord with matters that we are nervous and fearful about. Let us confront our fears with “Yet I will” because the Lord has promised us His strength and the infilling of His Spirit. Whatever “*thoughts*” and “*ands*” we may go through in our lives, let us be people of one resolution at our “core”, so that we can exult in God and bless the Lord at all times with His praise continually in our mouths.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: *Reflect on one key takeaway.*

Appoint someone to read Habakkuk 3:1-19 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, ‘This is the Word of the Lord.’

All to respond, “Thanks be to God.” Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now.”

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon “1 Resolution”?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a (i) What “resolution” did king David and Habakkuk make when going through a very tough situation in their lives in Psalm 34 and Habakkuk 3:1-19 respectively?
- (ii) What does this tell you about king David or Habakkuk?
- 2b. What would your response to God be if you were in a similarly tough situation?
- 2c. What is one thing you have learnt from Habakkuk in his prayer/psalm in Habakkuk 3:1-19 that can help you to make the same “1 resolution” despite not knowing how long this pandemic or other tough situations in your life may last or how much you would have to go through?
- 3a. What is your greatest fear in this season of your life?
- 3b. What are some “*thoughts*” and “*ands*” about your fear in 3a that you need to confront with “Yet I will”, in order to intentionally make your resolution to “exult in the Lord and rejoice in the God of your salvation”?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how God gave you strength to exult and rejoice in Him, the God of your salvation, in the midst of a very tough situation.

OR

Give thanks to God for His mercy, power and strength that you can rely on, in all situations.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3b and 3c above, committing to support one another to intentionally make the one resolution to “exult in the Lord and rejoice in the God of your salvation” despite your fears.

As a group, take time to also discuss what tangible help you can offer one another should any of you have to go through the “*thoughts*” and “*ands*” mentioned in 3b so you can help lighten each other’s burdens in times of need.

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