

When God Doesn't Make Sense

Scriptures for Today

Habakkuk 2:1–4

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. 2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. 4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone in this room is waiting on something. Maybe it's a diagnosis that hasn't come back yet, a prodigal who hasn't come home yet, a marriage that hasn't healed yet, a prayer that hasn't been answered yet. And the hardest part of waiting isn't the waiting itself — it's the silence that seems to fill it. When God doesn't answer on our timetable, something in us starts to wonder if He's answering at all.

The prophet Habakkuk knew that silence. He had already brought God his hardest questions — why does evil seem to win, why does judgment seem to tarry, why does the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer? And in chapter one, God's answers only seemed to raise harder questions. So by the time we reach chapter two, Habakkuk does something remarkable. He doesn't walk away. He doesn't demand answers on his own terms. He climbs up to his watchtower and waits.

That's where our text picks up. And what unfolds in these four verses is not a tidy explanation for why life doesn't make sense — it's something better. It's a picture of how God's people are meant to live in the space between the promise and its fulfillment. Because most of us are not looking for a theological essay on the problem of evil. We're looking for a way to keep standing when the answer hasn't come yet.

Habakkuk 2:1 through 4 gives us exactly that. It begins with a man taking his stand, watching, waiting, ready to hear whatever God will say to him — even if it means being corrected. And that's exactly where we need to begin as well.

I. The Watchman's Posture

Habakkuk 2:1

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd.

Notice what Habakkuk does not do. He does not storm off in frustration. He does not stop praying because the last round of answers was hard to hear. He climbs the tower. He takes his stand. He positions himself to watch — deliberately, attentively — for whatever God will say next.

And notice something else. He is not only watching for an answer he can use against his complaint. He says he is watching to see what he shall answer when he is reprov'd. Habakkuk is prepared to be corrected. He is not simply demanding vindication; he is bringing himself, humbly, into a posture where God's word can shape him rather than merely confirm him.

This is the first thing this passage calls us to. When our questions go unanswered, we are called to station ourselves expectantly before God, not to walk away from Him. And when God's answer comes — even if it challenges our assumptions or our plans — genuine faith receives that correction humbly instead of defending its own position.

Think of someone sitting in a hospital waiting room after a loved one goes into surgery. They don't leave. They don't distract themselves into numbness. They sit, alert, watching the door, ready to hear whatever the doctor says — good or hard. That is a posture of engaged waiting, not passive waiting. Habakkuk climbs his watchtower the same way: not to escape the hard questions, but to stay present for the answer, whatever it is.

So the application is direct. Bring your unresolved questions directly to God in prayer rather than burying them in silence or venting them only to others. Habakkuk modeled this by stationing himself to hear from God

specifically. And when God's answer challenges your assumptions or your plans, receive the correction humbly instead of defending your position. Ask Him to show you where your perspective, not His timing, needs to change.

Habakkuk doesn't just wait in silence — he receives an answer. And what God gives him is a word he can hold onto long after the watching is over.

II. The Word That Will Not Lie

Habakkuk 2:2–3

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

God does not leave Habakkuk with silence. He answers. And the answer He gives is meant to last — to be written down, made plain, set where it can be read clearly. This is not a private, vague impression meant only for the moment. It is a word meant to steady God's people long after this particular conversation with Habakkuk has ended.

But notice the tension God builds directly into His own answer. The vision is for an appointed time. It will speak at the end and not lie. And yet — it may tarry. Habakkuk is told plainly that waiting is coming. The promise is certain, but the timing is not immediate. And then comes one of the most striking lines in the whole book — it will surely come, it will not tarry. From where Habakkuk stands, it tarries. From where God stands, it does not. Both are true at once. The delay is real on our side of the calendar; it is not a delay at all on God's.

This is the second thing this passage gives us. God's answer is meant to be plain and lasting, giving His people something sure to hold onto through the wait. And though fulfillment may seem delayed by our clock, it is never late by God's; His word will surely come to pass.

Consider a person who has been given a firm delivery date for something they are depending on — moving day, a court ruling, a long-awaited shipment. The date doesn't move just because the waiting feels long. Their confidence isn't in how the wait feels; it's in the reliability of the date itself. That is the kind of confidence Habakkuk is given — not a vague hope, but a word fixed and certain, even while the calendar hasn't caught up to it yet.

So return to a specific promise or passage of Scripture and hold onto its exact wording during your current wait, rather than relying on feelings or circumstances to gauge whether God is faithful. And when a situation feels delayed beyond reason, remind yourself that God's timetable and your perception of delay are not the same thing. Choose to trust the certainty of His word over the pace of its arrival.

But a sure word still leaves one question unanswered: how do we live in the meantime, while we wait for it to come to pass? Verse four gives us the answer.

III. The Just Shall Live by Faith

Habakkuk 2:4

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Here is the hinge of the whole passage — and really, the hinge of the whole book. God sets two ways of facing the wait side by side. One is the soul that is lifted up — proud, self-reliant, leaning on its own strength and its own understanding to get through. God says plainly that this soul is not upright. It is inwardly unsteady, no matter how confident it may look on the outside.

The other is the just — the righteous one — who shall live by faith. Not by performance. Not by having the wait figured out. Not by managing the outcome. By faith. Trust in the word God has already spoken becomes the ground on which this person stands while everything else is still uncertain.

Picture two people crossing a frozen lake. One tests the ice with every step, trusting his own judgment of its thickness, growing more anxious with each crack he hears. The other has been told by someone who surveyed

the whole lake that the ice is solid all the way across, and walks steadily because he trusts that report. Both are on the same ice. Only one is at rest. The difference isn't the ice — it's what each man is leaning on.

That is the choice set before us every time we wait on God. And this is where the passage speaks most directly to our standing before God Himself. The righteous are not sustained by their own strength but by faith — a settled trust that is the sole and sufficient ground of life. This is precisely what the New Testament takes up when it quotes this verse again and again: eternal life is received by faith in Jesus Christ alone, not earned by works, not secured by performance, not maintained by how well we manage our own waiting.

So examine any area where you have quietly substituted self-reliance for trust — a habit, a relationship, a plan you are managing on your own strength — and consciously entrust it to God instead. And rest in the security that your standing before God rests on faith in Christ alone, not on how well you are handling the wait. Let that settled truth steady you rather than striving to earn peace through performance.

CONCLUSION

Two men on the same ice. That is really the choice in front of every one of us. One tests the ice with his own strength, growing more anxious with every step, because his confidence is in himself. The other walks steadily because his confidence is in a report he trusts. Habakkuk had every reason to test the ice on his own — the injustice was real, the timing made no sense, the wait was long. But he learned to stand on something sturdier than his own understanding: the sure word of God.

That is the invitation of this text. Not an explanation for every hard providence, but a place to stand while the answer is still on its way. God's word has not changed since Habakkuk wrote it on those tablets. It still speaks. It still does not lie. And it will still surely come.

So if you are watching — waiting for something that hasn't come yet, wondering if God has forgotten to answer — hear what He said to Habakkuk. The vision is for an appointed time. It will not tarry. And in the meantime, you are not called to hold yourself together by sheer will. You are called to live by faith — the same faith that is the sole ground of eternal life for everyone who trusts in Christ, not earned by works, not maintained by performance, but held secure because it rests entirely on Him.

Whatever you are standing on your own watchtower waiting for, let go of the soul that is lifted up in its own strength, and rest in the One whose word will not fail you.

The just shall live by faith.