

Anticipating trials

How often have we anticipated trials and have started panicking about all the possible outcomes which are generally all negative. We get anxious and fear the worst. If someone has been told they are going to be retrenched they start worrying about how they're going to pay the bills and live. Someone else might be informed that they have cancer, or some other terminal illness, and they start worrying about their life, or children, or family, or all of it. How do we live in the midst of anticipated trials?

Habakkuk 3: 1 – 19

1) Remembering the deeds of the Lord (1 – 10)

- The first thing we do when we know that we're going to face trials is remember what God has done in the past.
 - What He has done in our own lives in the past
 - What He has done in the lives of others
- Habakkuk starts by exclaiming that he has heard of the fame of the Lord and that he stands in awe of His deeds.
- Then there's a plea to repeat them in our time.
 - When we know what God has done in the past we obviously want Him to do the same for us when we face impending trials.
 - Although we may know why God is bringing difficulties into our lives we still cry out to Him to have mercy on us because we recognise our need for His mercy in every situation that we face.
- We acknowledge that God comes intervenes from unexpected places.
 - Have we ever been in a situation where we didn't know how even God would get us out of it. But He always did.
- His deeds were obvious to everyone as His glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth.
 - This was probably referring to the fear of the Lord that the nations had when they saw how He led the Israelites out of Egypt
- We remember the plagues and pestilences in Egypt as he demonstrated His power over the gods of Egypt and over other more established nations than themselves.

2) Remembering the deliverance of the Lord (11 – 15)

- We then remember the wonders of God in nature and how He brought about victory and deliverance through the changing of natural phenomena.
 - The sun and the moon stood still when God gave Joshua and the Israelites victory over the Amorites in Joshua 10: 12 – 13
- Then Habakkuk uses a theophany – a visible manifestation of God on earth – to demonstrate the deliverance of God's people
 - God strode the earth
 - He threshed the nations
 - He came to deliver His people
 - He crushed the leader of the land of wickedness – it could be referring to Pharaoh but there are a number of other incidences that could it could be referring to.
 - Verse 15 talks about the churning of the waters pointing to the deliverance of Israel through the Red Sea.
- If God could bring about such great and powerful deliverances of His people in the past then surely He can do it again for us regardless of our circumstances.
- Remember the ultimate deliverance of the Lord in Jesus dying on the cross for our sins delivering us from sin, shame, guilt and the wrath of God to come.

3) Living in the fear and assurance of the Lord (16 – 19)

- When we look at God's deeds and His mighty works of deliverance we ought to be awestruck and fear the Lord for what He can do.
 - Matthew 10: 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.
 - Hebrews 12: 18 – 29
- Our attitude at a time of impending trials
- Though everything be taken from me yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my saviour.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 18 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
- Let us take hold of the fact the Sovereign Lord is our strength.
 - Ephesians 6: 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
- He makes us sure footed – a deer on the heights can walk up narrow paths and is sure footed enough not to slip on the most treacherous mountain slopes.
 - In the same way He will make us steadfast in the most difficult of circumstances.