

Sunday, November 29, 2015

“Jesus and Our Longing for Encouragement”

First in the Series, “Light in the Darkness: Jesus and our Deepest Longings”

Steve Watson

What the prophets teach us at Christmastime:

1. God sees and feels and responds to our longings and our needs.
2. God is both smaller and bigger than we’d tend to assume.

How can Jesus encourage me this month?

1. Go back to seventh grade: it’s OK that you want to be seen, known, and responded to.
2. Complain, complain again, and pray. Repeat as needed.
3. Remember any signs that God is on the scene.
4. Eat courage for breakfast.
5. When encouragement comes, write a song about it.

Habakkuk 1:2-4 (NRSV)

O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?

³ Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. ⁴ So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous—therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

Habakkuk 1:12-2:1 (NRSV)

¹² Are you not from of old, O LORD my God, my Holy One?

You shall not die. O LORD, you have marked them for judgment;

and you, O Rock, have established them for punishment. ¹³ Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and you cannot look on wrongdoing; why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they? ¹⁴ You have made people like the fish of the sea, like crawling things that have no ruler. ¹⁵ The enemy brings all of them up with a hook; he drags them out with his net, he gathers them in his seine; so he rejoices and exults.

¹⁶ Therefore he sacrifices to his net and makes offerings to his seine; for by them his portion is lavish, and his food is rich.

¹⁷ Is he then to keep on emptying his net, and destroying nations without mercy? ² I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint.

Habakkuk 2:12-14 (NRSV)

“Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed, and found a city on iniquity!” ¹³ Is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labor only to feed the flames, and nations weary themselves for nothing? ¹⁴ But the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:2-4 (NRSV)

Then the LORD answered me and said:

Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. ³ For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. ⁴ Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NRSV)

Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails, and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, and makes me tread upon the heights. To the leader: with stringed instruments.