Trusting in the Lord in Every Season of Life

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Habakkuk chapter 2, we're going to take a short step out of the gospel of Mark for today.

Next Sunday, Lord willing, we'll be back to finish Mark chapter 12. This is a special day today. As John has mentioned, we celebrate Mother's Day today, and so happy Mother's Day to all of the moms that are with us today.
I'm always aware on Mother's Day that it's a hard day for some. For many among us, Mother's Day is a great day of celebration, but for a number of reasons, this can be a particularly hard day for others.
If that's true for you today, I want you to know how glad I am that you're here. And I pray that as we turn to God's Word together, even if this is a heavy day for you, that you would be encouraged by the Word.
I also recognize that for many that the Lord has blessed with children to be able to be a mom, that the ministry of motherhood, while unbelievably challenging, is incredibly rewarding.
[1:28] And as the old saying goes, the days pass slowly, but the years pass quickly. That is strange because it's so true.

Today's a reminder of that as we celebrate Senior Recognition Day. Every godly mother is doing their best to teach and train their children to know and to love the Lord.
And yet, every mother that loves the Lord is well acquainted with how slow the spiritual maturing process can be.
We know what it's like, all of us that have been praying for others in their spiritual walk with the Lord, to pray for things that seem like they are slow or late in arriving.
But for all of our moms who are here today, I want to serve you faithfully most of all by taking you to God's Word. And I pray you'll be blessed by it.
[2:36] This is, secondly, a special day because it's Senior Recognition Day. And while every graduating class we have every year is very special, this one is unique in its size.

This is the largest senior class we have ever had at our church. Thirty-nine graduating seniors. And if your next question is yes, but how many of those 39 are actually a part of our church, the answer is 39.
It's a very large group, a very faithful group, a group of seniors that has made an incredible investment in the life of our church.
And these seniors who are right now in the gym with our senior breakfast with our seniors and their family, it looks like Family Matters dinner down there.
There's so many people that are in there for the graduates and their families. They, in the next four years, will make so many life-altering decisions. What career path to take.
[3:50] If they're going to college, where to go. Who to marry. Where to live. And I want to be faithful to serve our graduates who will be with us in our next service by taking them to God's Word today and sharing a word for them.

And then thirdly, not only is it Mother's Day and Senior Recognition Day, but even more important than both of those, this is the Lord's Day. This is a day that is about our Lord, as is every day.
And the focus, every Sunday, ultimately, must rest with the Lord. And so, for each of us that have gathered here in the Lord's house this morning, I pray that I can serve you well by strengthening your walk with the Lord.
As we look to God's Word, what I pray would be a timely word for us. So, the book of Habakkuk is one of my favorites.

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I have read and studied and taught through Habakkuk a number of times. One of my absolute favorite books of the Bible. And one of the reasons why is because it's such an honest book, and the way that Habakkuk begins is with honest frustration.
[5:11] And the Bible doesn't hide the prophet's frustration. He's upset with his own people. But it's worse than that. He's really frustrated with God.

When Habakkuk begins in chapter 1, he is frustrated because it feels to him like God is deaf. It feels like God is distracted.
And maybe worst of all, to Habakkuk, it feels like God is even disinterested in what is going on. And I just want to say that while this isn't the main point of what I want to share this morning, don't miss this.
In the early pages of Habakkuk, he's upset. He's frustrated. He handles his anger in some improper ways that the Bible records for us. But I do want to speak up for the prophet in this.
That while he is frustrated and disappointed and upset and not handling everything the way that he should, he never lets go of talking to God.
[6:20] And you can do worse than that. Even though he feels like God is deaf, he keeps praying to him. And even though he feels like God is far removed from him, he continues to cry out to him.

I can't endorse everything that Habakkuk does or the way that he says it, but I can say at least he never stops crying out to God.
I think that's worth recognizing. After Habakkuk voices his complaints, the Lord responds to him. He didn't have to, but he does.
And the Lord tells Habakkuk to just hold on. He says, I do see what's happening. I'm not deaf. I'm not disinterested. I'm not distracted.
I know exactly what's going on. And I'm not passive. The Lord says, I'm actually doing something among you that you wouldn't even believe if I told it to you.
[7:29] And then he tells him. And he says, what I'm going to do is I'm going to raise up the Babylonians and they're going to move into town and they are going to completely take over and conquer the land.

And Habakkuk can't believe it. When Habakkuk hears what God's plan is, the plan to Habakkuk feels worse than when he thought God wasn't even paying attention.
Habakkuk Habakkuk Habakkuk then argues back with God, which is not a wise thing to do. But at least he keeps going to God.
If Habakkuk were a church member and he came into my office and he said, here's my frustration and here's what I'm going to say to God, I would tell him, don't, don't do it like that.
It's not smart. But I would appreciate that even when he felt like God was deaf, he kept praying anyway.
[8:46] And I would be encouraged that even though the way he handles his anger is not the way it should be handled, he still believes in the power of his God.

Habakkuk's in quite a paradox. I feel like God is deaf but I keep crying out to him. I'm frustrated because I know God is powerful and can do something about it and yet it feels like God's not doing anything.
I'm praying to God because he's sovereign and yet when he tells me his plan, I try to talk him out of it. Habakkuk in chapter one is a bit of a walking paradox.
Not all that different from us. You can relate at least in some way with questions like, God, why are you doing this?
Or God, why aren't you stopping this? Or God, how long will you tolerate this?
[10:03] Or God, why are you going to make me be a part of this storm? And so Habakkuk complains a second time.

And then chapter two verse one says, I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what he will say to me and what I will answer concerning my complaint.
Habakkuk's complained, God answered. Habakkuk has his rebuttal, complains a second time, and basically says, alright God, your turn, I'm watching and when you get done, I'll be ready to give you my answer.
the irony here is that he's praying to God because he knows that God is sovereign, and if God is sovereign, if I'm Habakkuk, I might be just a little anxious and nervous that God might just choose to

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show how powerful he really can be right now.
But God is patient. And as the Lord responds, I want us to look this morning just at verses 2, 3, 4, and 5, just this initial response God gives to Habakkuk.
[11:27] And I want you to make note of one overarching thing I want you to take away from today. The first part is this, the Lord provides for his people.

Make note of that. The Lord provides for his people. Verse 2, And the Lord answered me, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.
The Lord is providing for his people by revealing to Habakkuk what he's about to do. Now, we don't have time to get into the depth of this.
There's a little bit of challenge in interpreting exactly what is meant when it says so that he may run who reads it. The language there can suggest a few different things.
I think the best way to understand it is that the idea is, Habakkuk, I'm going to reveal this plan to you, write it down, make it plain, put it where people can see it, so that as people in town are going around, they will see the vision as they are on their way and be able to run and spread the word.
[12:55] I think that's the best way to understand what he's saying. I'm going to give you a vision, I want you to record it, and I want you to put it where everyone can see it.

This isn't a hidden thing. The one who reads it is going to run. They're going to run and tell. They're going to run and spread the word because what he's about to reveal to them is so overwhelming that people need to know what's about to take place.
But even in the Lord giving the word to Habakkuk, which is not an easy word by the way, this is a hard revelation. Habakkuk's people are filled with sin, their leaders are filled with sin, and everyone is just allowing destruction and violence and thievery and bribery, and the justice system's been completely corrupted, it's crooked, and God says, I'm going to deal with it.
And I'm going to take this nation over here, and I'm going to bring them into the land, and they're going to conquer you, and they're going to destroy your cities, and they're going to take people that live in the promised land, and they're going to take them far away to a distant land.
This is a hard revelation for Habakkuk to receive. faith. But even though it's hard, the Lord is still providing for His people.
[14:42] He's still speaking to them. He's still near to them. And though they're going to be taken away, they're going to be brought back.

And God is going to be faithful to those who are His. God is not providing for us if we don't get it our way.
Habakkuk teaches the exact opposite of that. God is always providing for His people, but He doesn't always do it the way that you want or expect, because you're not God.
And that's the whole point here at the early part of Habakkuk. Habakkuk's not God. He doesn't know everything. He doesn't see everything. He doesn't understand everything.
He's not in charge of anything, which is why he's praying to God in the first place. So I just want to remind you that in your own personal life, when things are not how you want them to be, the very fact that you're praying to God is a reminder that He's God and we're not.
[15:58] So yes, we can offer up our honest requests and needs and thoughts before the Lord, but just remember the reason you're praying to Him is because He's holy, He's perfect, He's in heaven, He's on His throne, you're not.

So let humility and submission always be the posture with which you pray to the Lord. Lord. The Lord provides for His people.
But let's keep building on that. From verse 3, the Lord provides for His people, let's add to it, in His timing and His ways.
The Lord provides for His people in His timing and in His ways. Verse 3, For still the vision awaits its appointed time.
In other words, God has a plan, that plan is set, it's going to happen, but it's only going to happen at the appointed time. Appointed by who? By God.
[17:12] There is a purpose and there is a plan and there is a schedule. schedule and Habakkuk did not write the schedule. And in your life, just remind yourself, God has a plan in your life too and it's His schedule, not yours.

That's important. Because otherwise, you're going to walk around always feeling like you know better than God. The Lord provides for His people in His timing and His ways.

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He says, the vision awaits, it's appointed time, which means, Habakkuk, what I'm telling you, this is true, this is going to happen, and here's the hardest part.
You're going to have to wait for it. Anyone in the sanctuary today ever struggled with having to wait on God?
this can be the most challenging part of the Christian life. It's that waiting.
[18:27] It's the unknown. It's the reminder that you're not really in charge of anything. He says, this vision's coming, it's going to happen, but it won't happen until it's appointed time.

And He says, it hastens to the end, it will not lie, meaning what I'm recording for you, what I'm revealing to you, is going to come to pass, and now here's the really hard part at the end of verse 3. If it seems slow, wait for it. It will surely come, it will not delay.
In the original text, this actually has a double verb. It literally would say, coming, it will come. Now, when you read what the Lord has revealed to Habakkuk, it's an interesting thing.
If it seems slow, wait for it. And now the end of verse 3, it will not delay.
[19:45] It's an interesting paradox, right? The reason you're waiting for it is because it's slow. Yet, the Lord says, it will not delay.

And right here in this one sentence, his parenthood in a nutshell.
This is pastoring in a nutshell. This is discipleship in a phrase. It seems slow, but it will not delay. time. Now, how can that be? How can something be slow, and yet right on time? Well, you know the answer.
It seems slow to you, but it's right on time with God's plan. And this is where real Christians in the real world must get to.
[21:00] To where you can say, Lord, this is my request, this is my heart, these are the needs as I understand them, and this is what I'm asking you to do.

But the time between your desired answer and his appointed time may seem slow to you, but you've got to remind yourself it is right on schedule with God's plan.
And if that delay creates inconvenience for you, then so be it.
But that's hard, isn't it? We want things now. You want your child to learn a lesson now.
you want them to stop repeating the same mistakes you've already dealt with. When are we going to see the fruit of this?
[22:02] When are we going to see the work of this? When is it going to all make sense? And then you've got to remind yourself God has been so patient with you.

And if nothing else, when you're frustrated raising your children because they just don't learn the lesson, if nothing else, just remind yourself they came from you.
They're slow to learn gene. Guess where that came from? It didn't skip a generation. It came directly from you. That doesn't mean that you should take lightly their disobedience.
That doesn't mean at all that you don't take seriously teaching and training your children. It does mean though, that even in the frustration of the hard days of parenting, you should stop and say to yourself, if not for the grace of God, I would have no hope, but he was gracious to me and patient with me and I'm going to parent these children with grace and with kindness and with discipline and with long suffering and with perseverance because God did the same for you.
Now, if I had life my way, things would happen much more quickly.
[23:30] Everything would happen much more quickly. I assume the same would be true for you. Maybe except for just the passing of years.

There's a sense of which we all kind of want to slow that down. Although, I just want to tell you, those of you who are, I'm preaching to younger people all the time, which probably says something about my stage in life, let me just tell you something.
Don't fear the coming stages of life. It's how God designed it. And I know, and this is on Mother's Day, I don't even know why I'm saying this on Mother's Day, half of you in this room will not even believe me or care about this or agree with me.
That's fine. The other half will just be right, okay? But I know there's that part that just wants to stop time and just stop time right now.
I don't want my kids to get older and you don't want to get older. I just want to keep everybody small and young and right there and dependent upon you. But just understand, God has so designed your life to learn more of him through the stages of life.

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[24:52] And that's a blessing. There are things you learn when you're 30 that you just didn't get when you were 15. Nothing wrong with being 15.

but there's just some wisdom you have at 30 you didn't have at 15. And if your mom could have stopped time and kept you at 15, you would have lived the rest of your life without getting the wisdom that you needed between 15 and 30.
But how different is your perspective of life at 50 than 30? 30? There's not a 50 year old in this room who would go back to being 30 in terms of what they know and understand and have come to experience with the Lord.
Oh sure, those of us at 50, we wouldn't mind getting out of bed without making noise. I get that. But you wouldn't trade what you've learned about the Lord in these 20 years to go back to 30.
because God has so designed you that the stages of life help you to learn more and more of the character of your God and deepens your trust in Him.
[26:18] And you give me somebody at 95? Look, the Lord has designed us to love our life and to love family. And people at 95, they want another year.

They want another two years. They want another five years. They love their family. They want to be around their family. But when they get to their last days for a believer, they understand what awaits them is far greater than anything they're about to lose.
And it takes time to get that kind of wisdom. God has a purpose and He has a plan.
But most likely, as you cry out to the Lord, most of the time, our frustration and prayer is, God, do this quickly.
Why don't you change the situation faster? And the answer is, to you, it may seem slow, but it will not delay.
[27:40] it will be right on time. Right on time according to His plan.

And so, in between your praying and the Lord's answer is this season we call waiting, where we learn more about God and more about ourselves than any other season we go through.
And if there were no waiting, we would become a very shallow, worldly, materialistic people.
demanding things be done our way, on our time, according to our preference, and that is as far from trusting in the Lord as you can get.
And so, what God is saying to Habakkuk is, I see the sin of your people, I'm not passive, I'm doing something, it's going to get hard, it's going to be rough, and you're going to have to wait.
[29:08] And while you're waiting, you're going to have to trust. And I don't have any idea all the different kinds of ways that truth would be being lived out in your lives today, but I suspect there's plenty of people here this morning who understand what that means to say, while you're waiting, you're going to have to trust.

While you're waiting for your child to spiritually grow and mature, while you're waiting to find out, does God have for me to get married? While you're waiting to find out, does God desire for us to have children?
While you're waiting to find out, God, where is the job going to come from? While you're waiting to find out, God, how is this sickness and disease going to take place? God, what's going to happen with my adult children?
All the different things that we think about and pray about, while you're in the season of waiting, you're going to have to remind yourself that you submit your will to the purpose of God.
God, and if you're a mother, or a graduating senior, or a Christian of any age on this planet, you must learn that lesson.
[30:37] God, the Lord provides for His people in His timing and in His ways. Well, let's finish the thought.

The Lord provides for His people, in His timing, in His ways, here's the last part, so that we may trust in Him alone.
So that we would trust in Him alone. You see this in verse 4, through just the daily exercise of our faith, behold, His soul is puffed up.
It is not upright within Him. This is for the one who does not trust the Lord. Here's how they live. Their soul is puffed up. That word puffed up means bloated.
It's a beautiful picture, isn't it? Don't you love to feel bloated? It's a word that also can mean tumorous. The soul of the one who's not trusting in God, who's not believing in Him, who's not waiting on His timing, that person's soul is bloated.

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[31:54] It's tumorous. It's a cancerous soul. But the righteous shall live by His faith.

Now you're familiar with that statement, the righteous shall live by His faith. And it sounds very New Testament, doesn't it? Well it is in the New Testament, but it started in the Old Testament.
We read this same phrase three times in the New Testament, but it's borrowed from Habakkuk. And this statement of the righteous shall live by His faith, in context, is saying to Habakkuk, you've got two ways to live.
Look, God's will is going to take place, and God's will is difficult, and it's a will of judgment that's coming. And he tells Habakkuk, you're going to have to wait.
You don't know when it's going to happen, you don't know all the details, you're just going to have to be in this long season of waiting. And the answer to the question of how do I do that, is this, live by your faith.
[33:09] So the question is, what do I do while I'm waiting? I really, really want to be married. What do I do while I'm waiting?

We really want to have children. We've not been able to have children. What do I do while I'm waiting? My children aren't walking with the Lord, and I'm burdened for that.
What do I do while I'm waiting and while I'm praying? I'm really anxious about this season of life. I've just moved to a new city. I just took a new job. I'm going to a new school. I've applied to four different colleges. I haven't been accepted yet. What do I do while I'm waiting?
Here's the answer. you live by your faith. And while the word faith is the important part there and the part that we must understand, we're not going to live by anything else.
[34:25] We're going to live by our faith. I want you to also emphasize in your mind the word live. While you're waiting, you live. live. You live in your faith.

I know it can be hard when life feels imperfect, but if you're waiting to live your life until everything is perfect, you're going to waste the whole thing. Live today by faith.
faith. Some of you have grief in your life and it's hard because your heart is broken and that's a real, real struggle.
But even in the midst of that struggle, keep living life in and live by your faith. And some of you, your lives are imperfect and maybe Mother's Day even makes that harder because you miss your mom who's passed away or for some, you've buried a child and it's just an unspeakable pain and loss and for others, your family relationship and dynamic is so far from what you imagined it would be or your family lives so far away and you feel so alone and isolated.
All of these very real life circumstances are present all around the sanctuary today. And I just want to say to you on the authority of God's word that though your circumstances are not ideal, here's what you do every day.
[35:56] You live. You live. You don't retreat. You don't live in a bunker. You don't back away and say, when I get married, then I'll walk with Jesus.

When this prayer gets answered, then I'll live a real life. When everything falls in place, then I'll seek the Lord. If you do that, you're going to waste the whole thing. Here's what you do while you're waiting for the difficult circumstances.
You live by your faith. You live. You keep living. You wake up and you thank the Lord for the day and you open your Bible and say, God, I need to know things I don't know.
Teach me. Lead me. And you say, God, you've given me blessings that I'm probably blind to. Help me to see what you've already provided for me.
Lord, help me to make a difference for you, to teach my children, to share the gospel, to do things that you've left me on earth to do. Help me today to live by my faith.
[37:15] Some of you are living, but you're not living by faith. Others of you have faith, but you're not really living. faith. And the answer from the Lord of the prophet is that we are to live by our faith.

Romans 1.17 says, the righteous shall live by faith. Galatians 3.11, the righteous shall live by faith. Hebrews 10, my righteous one shall live by faith.
over and over and over again, the Lord speaks to His people in His words saying, when life is difficult, and when it feels like you're in a season of waiting, and when you feel frustrated, and when you don't understand why everything's happening the way that it is, here's what you do.
You keep on living, and you take the faith that you have, the truth you know about God, and you live it out in every situation of your life.

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The righteous one lives by faith. So, today we think about our families on Mother's Day, and can I just remind you that no family is perfect?
[38:47] perfect. There's too many of you in this room right now convinced your family is the only one that's got issues.

No family is perfect. And can I just remind you that even if right now, while your family's not perfect, even if you kind of have everything exactly the way that you want it, change is coming.
It's the way it works. People get older, they move away, they get sick, real life happens, change is coming.
Don't need to dread that. Don't need to be afraid of that. Don't need to change. But you better have a faith that you can rely on and that you can apply in any situation.
And while we've got 39 seniors that we recognize today that are about to graduate, that's 39 families that are about to be changed forever.
[40:11] forever. It's not going to be worse. It is going to be different. In these next four years, or five years, or seven years, depending on what, how college goes, whether they're going to college, it's a roller coaster.

future. These 39 seniors, the next four years, will experience greater joys than they've ever known, and I promise you, will have more frustration and heartache than they've ever experienced.
They thought it was hard when their third grade boyfriend broke up with them, wait till it happens in college, right? It gets harder. And what these 39 seniors better have is a faith that they can apply in every season of life.
And you may say, I'm a 60-year-old man, I'm not a mother, I'm not graduating, I don't have a graduate, I can't even spell graduate.
What's all this mean for me? Here's what it means for you, my dear friend. In your life, if you're going to follow the Lord, you're going to have to have the kind of faith that says, this seems slow, but it's right on time.
[41:50] And in this in-between season of waiting, here's what I choose to do. I'm going to live. And I'm going to live by faith.

And while I may not understand or even like everything I see, I will take what I know to be true about God and I will live with that in mind every single day because we know the Lord provides for His people in His timing and His ways so that we will trust in Him alone.
Lord, we thank You for Your Word. I pray that it would be an encouragement and a help to our people today. I pray that we would live faithful lives as we trust in You alone.
Thank you.

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