

Dear Smith Chapel family,

November 29, 2025

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since we will be joining the Dranesville Church of the Brethren for joint worship this Sunday, I want to honor our promise to continue the sermon series **“Study Prophecy – Become Prophetic.”** This week’s focus is on the prophet **Habakkuk**, and I want to share this message with you in written form. Please take a quiet moment this weekend to read, reflect, and pray through this pastoral encouragement as the Holy Spirit leads and guides you.

First, let me ask you: **How was your Thanksgiving?**

I imagine some of you enjoyed a peaceful couple of days—good food, good naps, and no drama. Praise God for that. But others might have had a... *memorable* Thanksgiving.

A friend of mine once hosted a big family gathering. After days of preparation, she pulled out a perfectly roasted turkey—crispy, golden, beautiful. But as she carried it to the counter, it slipped. The turkey hit the floor. Flattened like pudding. A Thanksgiving to remember—but not in the way she hoped. Some of you had that kind of week. Or worse.

And some of you may quietly admit: **“Pastor, I didn’t feel very thankful this year.”** You know the Bible says, “Give thanks in all circumstances.” But sometimes life feels so heavy, so confusing, that no matter how you squeeze your heart... gratitude doesn’t come out. If that’s you, Habakkuk is your companion. Habakkuk understood disappointment, fear, and confusion. He looked at his world and cried: **“Lord, what are You doing? And why aren’t You doing something different?”** And yet—by the end of the book—something breathtaking happens: His despair becomes hope. His complaint becomes confidence. His lament becomes a joyful song. In Christ, the same transformation is possible for us.

Last week we looked at Nahum and the fall of Assyria. This week we turn to Habakkuk, who stands on the edge of a different collapse—the collapse of **his own nation**, Judah, as Babylon rises in power. Here’s the historical timeline briefly:

- 722 BC – Northern Israel falls to Assyria
- 701 BC – Assyria devastates 46 cities of Judah
- 612 BC – Nineveh falls; Assyria collapses
- 605 BC – Babylon defeats Egypt; Judah becomes a vassal
- 586 BC – Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed

Habakkuk ministered during the tense years between **620–605 BC**—when Judah was caught between two giants. Imagine a small Honda Civic squeezed on I-495 between two roaring 18-wheelers. That’s Judah. Behind them: collapsing Assyria. Ahead of them: rising Babylon. And Judah is that little car in the middle—trembling. Habakkuk looks around and sees: violence, corrupt courts, oppression of the poor, religious hypocrisy, the righteous suffering. And he prays one of the most honest prayers in Scripture: **“How long, Lord...?” (1:2–4)** Some of you have prayed that prayer too. “How long will this sickness last?” “How long will my child be far from You?” “How long until justice comes?” “How long will this anxiety cling to me?” Habakkuk becomes our companion in those questions.

God responds—but His answer shakes Habakkuk even more. **“I am raising up the Babylonians...” (1:5–11)** Habakkuk is stunned: “Lord—Babylon? They’re worse than we are!” Sometimes God’s silence is painful. But sometimes God’s answers are even more unsettling. That’s Habakkuk. Yet this is what makes Habakkuk unique among the prophets. Most prophets declare, *“Thus says the Lord,”* speaking down to the people. **But Habakkuk speaks *with* us, not at us.** He steps into our shoes. He voices our confusion. He asks our questions. He says, “I’m wrestling too.” His very name means **“to embrace,”** or **“to cling.”** He embraces our questions. He embraces our confusion. He even embraces our complaints. But he also embraces God’s promises with unwavering trust. Habakkuk is a man who clings to God in the dark.

Chapter 2 begins with this powerful picture: **“I will stand at my watch... and look to see what He will say to me.” (2:1)** Imagine Habakkuk climbing onto a city wall like a watchman at dawn. The sky is dark. The air cold. Babylon is coming. Yet he stands—eyes open, heart open—waiting for God. When life confuses us, Habakkuk shows us what to do: **Don’t run from God. Run toward Him. Position yourself to listen.** We always have two choices:

- 1. Run away from God**—numb the pain, distract ourselves, shut our hearts.
- 2. Run toward God**—bring our tears, questions, and fears honestly to Him—and wait.

Habakkuk chooses the second path. And God answers. Not by changing Habakkuk’s situation—but by changing Habakkuk. He is transformed: from complaint to confidence; from anxiety to adoration. Habakkuk’s prayer does not change God’s plan. **Habakkuk’s prayer changes Habakkuk.**

Then God gives the heart of the book: **“The revelation awaits an appointed time... Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. ... The righteous shall live by faith.” (2:3–4)** Beloved, faith is not merely believing doctrines. Faith is loyal confidence. Faith is clinging to God’s character even when we cannot see His plan (\*Read Hebrews 11 to grasp what the Bible teaches about faith.)

By chapter 3, Habakkuk is singing:

**“Though the fig tree does not bud  
and there are no grapes on the vines,  
though the olive crop fails  
and the fields produce no food,  
though there are no sheep in the pen  
and no cattle in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will be joyful in God my Savior.  
The Sovereign LORD is my strength;  
He makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
He enables me to tread on the heights.”**

This is not denial. This is not positive thinking. This is faith in the dark. Habakkuk says: **“Even if everything collapses, I will still trust the Lord.”** Why? **“The Sovereign LORD is my strength.” (3:19)** This is where God wants to take us—not shallow gratitude when everything goes well, but deep worship even when the turkey falls on the floor, the pantry is empty, or our hearts feel broken.

Today begins the season of **Advent**—a season of waiting, longing, and watching. God said to Habakkuk: **“Though it linger, wait for it.”** Israel waited centuries for the Messiah. Isaiah promised a coming King—*“Arise, shine...”* Generations waited. Then the appointed time came: Jesus—the Light of the world—entered history, bore our judgment, rose again, and promised: **“I am coming again.”**

We now live **between** the first and second Advent. Habakkuk waited for God’s saving act. We are waiting for Christ’s final return. And Jesus ends the Bible by saying: **“Look, I am coming soon.”** (Rev. 22:20) The church replies: **“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”** Until He comes, Habakkuk gives us our Advent posture: **“Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come...”** And in the meantime? **“The righteous will live by faith.”**

### **Where Are You in Habakkuk’s Story?**

Some of you are in **Habakkuk 1**: You’re asking, “How long, Lord?” **This week’s practice:**

Take 5 honest minutes and tell God exactly how you feel—no filters. Some are in **Habakkuk 2**:

You’re waiting in the “though it lingers...” season. **This week’s practice:** Write down one

Scripture promise and place it somewhere you'll see often—mirror, dashboard, or phone background. Some are tasting **Habakkuk 3**: Circumstances haven't changed, but *you* have. **This week's practice:** Share a testimony with someone this Advent about how God met you in the waiting.

At the Cross, everyone thought the story was over. Jesus died. The disciples scattered. But on the third day, He rose. What looked like the end became the beginning of new creation. The same God who turned Crucifixion into Resurrection can turn your lament into a song. As C. S. Lewis writes in *The Chronicles of Narnia*: “**Aslan is on the move.**” Even when the land feels frozen, the Lion is already at work.

My dear Smith Chapel family—**Jesus is on the move** in our world, in our church, and in your life. So, as we enter Advent, may this season be:

- A time of prayer—running to God, not from Him.
- A time of honest wrestling—bringing your questions to Him.
- A time of transformation—lament turning to joy.
- A time of prophetic living—walking alongside others in their pain, embracing them with Christ's compassion.

And may we gently point others to the One we have found along the way: **Jesus Christ—the reason for the season! Our Light, our Savior, our King, and our Song!**  
**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

In His Everlasting Arms,  
**Pastor Ho**