**November 19, 2017 “Thanksgiving” Habakkuk 3: 1-19**

On Thursday of this week, we will celebrate the Holiday called Thanksgiving. President George Washington proclaimed Thursday the 26th of November 1789 a day of “public thanksgiving and prayer” devoted to “the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be”. That was the first official declaration of the day of Thanksgiving in the United States. While we may still observe the Holiday, take time off from work, meet with family and friends, I really do not believe that most of the people living in the United States will take time to really be thankful for all that God has blessed us with in this nation.

Oh, we will have a little symbolism here and there. The President will pardon a turkey so it can live out its life free from the fear of being eaten. There will be a parade or two. There will be a couple of football games where there will be a token half-time show of a marching band in the form of a turkey but that will be about all.

I don’t know about you, but nearly everyone that I speak with in a meaningful conversation is concerned about the direction of this beloved country of ours. The corruption within government is palpable; the decay of our society is all around us as we observe the number of children being born to single mothers. Our prison population is bulging at the seams as the United States leads the world in the number of people incarcerated. 97 million Americans are either unemployed or even more shamefully, refuse to work. Our healthcare system, once the envy of the world is deteriorating before our very eyes. Did you hear the report that 47 million Americans are receiving government help in the form of food stamps?

We should change what is known as the Lord’s Prayer to “our great father in Washington, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done in Washington and in my home, give us this day my daily bread, take from me whatever you want, do to me whatever you think is good, watch my every move, monitor my every call, my every e-mail, keep me in your camera’s view at all times, track me with your GPS, save the trees and the whales and never let me live free again… Amen.

Habakkuk was in a dilemma, his basic dilemma was why God was allowing Israel to go down the drain as fast as she was, and then why in the world God ever allowed the Chaldeans to be able to come in and destroy Israel. He couldn't figure out why God would let Israel get this far away from Him and then he couldn't figure out why God would use such an ungodly unholy crew as the Chaldeans to come in to bring judgment upon Israel, and he was puzzled and perplexed by what he did not understand.

Habakkuk's attitude in his prayer is simply this: God I don't understand everything or much of anything. I don't understand why You let Israel go. I don't understand why You are bringing the Chaldeans to judge them. I don't understand why You are going to wait to judge the Chaldeans after that, I don't understand any of these things. But I do know that You are the God that is righteous. You are the God that is eternal and You are the God that never makes a mistake.

You are the God that hates sin, and because You are the God that never does anything wrong I’ll stand on that and praise You.

1. Habakkuk’s Prayer
   1. Habakkuk’s petition
      1. I heard what you said and I was afraid
         1. For his country
         2. For himself
         3. He just cannot figure this out
      2. Note what he does not ask for
         1. Israel’s deliverance
         2. Does not ask for victory
         3. Does not ask that things may go easy for him
         4. He does not ask for any of these things
            1. Because he knows God must punish sin
      3. But he does ask for God’s work to be done (Habakkuk 3:2)
         1. That things go according to God’s plan
         2. Not according to Habakkuk’s will

Let me stop right here and ask you what is your greatest fear? Not having enough food or your health? Is it not having enough money? Is it the rise of Islam in this country? Is it what is being taught to our children? Is it race relations? Is it national and personal debt?

I will say to you if any or if all of these things are at the forefront of your mind, you are in real trouble for the main concern of every child of God should be the purity of their life before God. What does God think of my life? Is what I am doing pleasing to Him?

It is my opinion that the greatest problem we are facing in the United States is that we as Christians no longer stand for righteousness. Why is it? Look at what is happening in Alabama.

Several years ago, Terry and I met Judge Roy Moore in Minneapolis and listened to a speech he gave. The content of the speech was the Christian foundation of America and how we as citizens, especially as Christian citizens need to stand up against the forces destroying this country.

This speech was given shortly after he had been removed from the Supreme Court of Alabama simply for displaying the Ten Commandments in public. Since that time, he was re-elected to that same position and while in that position simply issued a letter stating that until the law was settled on same sex marriage the previous law would remain in place. This too resulted in his removal from office and loss of retirement benefits. Now scurrilous accusations have been hurled at him again, not only from the opposition party but also from the party who supposedly supports him… primarily because they do not want the light of his character shining on their darkness.

We ought to be praying daily God be glorified in my life. We ought to pray that God be glorified in this church. We ought to pray that God be glorified in the United States of America. That should be the cry and the prayer on the heart of every believer in this country.

Malachi observed something we should never forget when he wrote these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Malachi 3:16-18… Please tell me… does this not relate to Hebrews 10:24-25?

1. Habakkuk gets his head on straight
   1. Habakkuk 3:3-15
      1. Remembrance of what God has done
      2. All for His people (Habakkuk 3:12-13)
2. History of God’s People
   1. It’s just simple. We just need to look back and we need to remember God’s continued constant never ending, never hesitating, never stopping faithfulness. And we take it from there. And we can stand face to face with the problem and we can back off of that problem and say now wait a minute, not only is my God good and right and never does anything wrong, and not only does He love me and care for me, and not only is He the kind of a God who is absolutely eternally righteous, but there is something else about Him, He’s also absolutely and eternally faithful. And He has promised to keep that which I have, what, committed unto to Him. That’s a New Testament promise for us. And Jesus said, “I will never, what, leave you or forsake you”.
      1. Does that mean we will not be afraid?
         1. Habakkuk 3:16… my inward parts trembled
         2. That fear does not and will not affect your relationship with God
            1. Nothing can separate us from the love of God
            2. What are we learning today?

The joy of the Lord is my strength

Will there be trouble in your life and mine? Of course, there will be. Will there be times of fear and doubt? Of course, there will be.

Observe Job… none of us want to go through what that man went through… but strangely enough… all of us want to say with Job… “Though He slay me… yet will I praise Him”, Job 13:15

1. In conclusion, look at the settled mind of Habakkuk when he fixes his eyes on His Redeemer
   1. Though
      1. Trees do not blossom
      2. No fruit on the vine
      3. Olive oil fails
      4. Fields dry up
      5. Cattle and sheep die
   2. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord
   3. I will joy in the God of my salvation
   4. Why
      1. The Lord is my strength
      2. He makes my feet like a deer
      3. He makes me to walk on high places

Thanksgiving is not at all about what we have or what we have received but it is all about the “God from whom all blessing flow”

Praise God from whom all blessing flow