

## **Burdens into Song** **Walter Beuttler**

[Comments: 1) All scriptures are from the KJV except where noted. 2) This message has been transcribed word for word (from Beuttler's own teachings) as accurately as possible (due to the quality of the recording). 3) Beuttler had his own dictionary of favorite words he used throughout his messages, and they have been transcribed and spelled out accordingly. 4) Spelling on certain proper names, airports, hotels, locations, etc. may not be exact. 5) Messages were spoken late 1960's, early 1970's. 6) Beuttler was a Bible teacher at NBI (a.k.a. EBI, Eastern Bible Institute) for 32 years traveling worldwide since early 1950's until a year before he went to be with the Lord in 1974.]

I'm reading to you from Habakkuk 1:1, and 3:19, the last statement. In fact, this is the only book in the Bible, to my knowledge, which begins with a burden and ends with a song. In between these two extremes, we have God's way of turning our burdens into a song. God's way of turning our burdens into a song.

**“The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.”** Habakkuk 1:1

**“To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.”** Habakkuk 3:19b

In the beginning of the book, the prophet is burdened, bowed down. His spirit is heavy, his heart is troubled, his mind is questioning. At the end of the book, he asks no more questions. The man is singing. God gave him, and gives us His secret of turning our burdens into a song. It is in fact, the story here of the perplexed prophet. He's perplexed because of what seems to him to be the strange doings of divine providence. The man cannot understand God. He cannot reconcile what he knows about God, or thinks he knows, with what God is doing or seems to be doing, so he's going through a great time of perplexity.

The man has three questions: In verse 2:

- 1) *“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!”*

The problem of unanswered prayer, or at least the problem of greatly delayed answers to prayer. There are many of God's people like that today, and doubtless some are here this morning. *“How long shall I cry, Lord?”* How long must I pray for my daughter on drugs? Umh. Sure thing.

Folks, I have never known an era when so many of God's people, God's families and minister families have so much trouble with one or more of their children. I imagine some of you in your heart could say, *“Amen.”* Is it that in these days Satan has particularly selected the ministry and God's people for special attention? In a sense, that would be a compliment - in a sense! It's quite a problem.

How long shall I pray for that daughter on drugs and Thou wilt not hear? How long must I pray for my rebellious son before he will come and surrender? How long Lord, *“is the burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw?”* He had a question - the problem of unanswered prayer.

In verse 3 he raises another question:

2) *“Why does thou show me iniquity?”*

Here you have the problem of persistent evil in the world without any intervention by God. He again has a question – WHY? How many of God’s people walk around with a why in their heart? Why did You take that little child for which we prayed for so long? Why did my boy not come back from Vietnam or Korea? Why did You permit such and such. God, why do You permit circumstances, happenings that appear to be the very negation of Your promises? God’s people go through situations, which on the surface seem to negate God’s promises and God’s character. Why Lord? Why do You let the world get worse and worse, and no one of us doubts that it is?

A lady said to me, *“Brother Beuttler, why does God let the devil live?”*

The answer was simple, *“Because He needs him for you.”* She didn’t ask another question.

God uses all kinds of instrumentalities. In fact, God wants to teach us not to ask some questions. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; those things, which are revealed, belong unto us. There are areas of truth and the working of divine providence, which God is keeping from our knowledge. Why?

I get to Australia fairly frequently and always stop with very rare exceptions, if any, at the Commonwealth Bible College in Brisbane. I’ll be there this summer again. I was out there at the school with the students teaching for morning - evening sessions. In the evening we went down to the Center City Assembly of God.

I’m not confining myself to Assemblies of God. I just say that’s where I went. I go everywhere, Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans. In France next summer, I’ll be with the Catholics. God’s not a denominationalist, you understand that. One body, one faith, one God and Father of us all. Why are we building fences? God is busy tearing them down and I’m helping Him. (Laughter).

All right, we went down to Center City night after night. Students who could find transportation went down too. One fellow went down on his motorcycle. We came back and went to bed. Late that night, well after midnight, I heard a rumpus. I got up, peeked out and here was the Australian police. I asked, *“Is anything wrong?”*

They said, *“Yes, one of the students got killed on the way back to school. He turned a corner on his motorcycle and hit another car and was thrown over and died.”* Whew!

The next morning when I came to chapel, the motorcycle was right out at the door of the chapel. They should have never put it there. It was all bent to pieces. They should have put that away. I don't know who was that foolish. The girls sat on one side sobbing, crying. Some of the fellows were crying. There was a gloom over that whole chapel.

The president walked up to me at my table on the platform and said to me, "*Brother Beuttler, the students are terribly upset. It's up to you to straighten them out. They're asking questions - why?*"

This boy went down to Center City to hear Brother Beuttler speak and it cost him his life, so you better look out! You can imagine how I felt. I felt awful. I gave them a study on Habakkuk. I took an hour with it. After the hour we had wondrous worship. Tears were wiped away and we went through the week as though nothing had happened. But people ask why?

Down at NBI a family went home for a weekend, father, mother and their two girls, playmates of our two girls. They got hit by a car. Their car careened into a gas station. It was set on fire. Nobody could get to it. In the back were the girls banging on the windows calling for help. Nobody could get near and the whole family was burned to a crisp. Why? Only a fool would ask that question. By that definition there are a lot of fools, these people who do not know God.

I was the senior teacher. I was asked to have the funeral service, two of them, one in our chapel. Here at an angle was the father's coffin, over here the mother, in front two little white coffins. What an assignment! A teacher met me on the way to chapel and said, "*Brother Beuttler, I'm glad it's you and not me. I don't know what I'd say. The people are asking why.*"

As I said there are many people with a why in their lives. I carried a why in my heart for many years until God saw I'd never get over it, and He gave me the answer. Habakkuk asked why.

Then in verse 13, he has another question:

3) "*Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously?*"

This is the question, the problem that has to do with the suffering of the righteous at the hands of the wicked. God, why do You permit the righteous people to suffer? The ungodly flourish like a bay tree, but Your own righteous people suffer at the hands of the wicked. Wherefore do You look on such a situation?

We had a pastor in Philadelphia during the last war when we had rationing. You know oil and gasoline were rationed. He went to the rations board to ask for 500 gallons of fuel oil for his home. They gave him 250. He said, "*I'm sorry, but I asked for 500. It's at least 500 that I need.*"

They said, *“Look here Reverend, we assume that every man is a liar and so we cut their requests in two, and if you’re a man who is telling the truth, that’s too bad for you. You get 50% of what you ask like everybody else.”*

There was an honest man suffering at the hands of the wicked. He could not heat his home with 250 gallons of oil. *“If you’re telling the truth, that’s your fault. That’s too bad for you. You get what everybody else gets.”* That’s what troubled this man.

Now then, what did this prophet do with his questions? You know, and I’m generalizing now and that’s dangerous because they’re many exceptions. My personal observation has been for some time that God’s people more and more pray less and less in trying to solve their own problems between themselves and God. They run to people. I know what students do.

They come to the teacher’s door, rap, rap, rap, rap.

*“Come in. Hi”*

*“I have a problem.”*

*“Have a seat.”* All right, the answer they get doesn’t suit them so they go to the next door, rap, rap, rap, rap. And they go down the line until they find somebody that agrees with them. Many times they don’t want an answer to their question. They want to find somebody that agrees with them so they can quote them. People seem to get away from the personal secret of going to God. They prefer to ring doorbells, so to speak.

I get phone calls from I don’t know how far away. One lady called me and said, *“Brother Beuttler, would you please go to God and find out whether it’s all right for me to shave the hair off my legs.”* (Laughter) Can you imagine me taking time with that? She ought to see a psychiatrist.

Now what did the prophet do?

**“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.”** Habakkuk 2:1

This man decided he was going to get himself on a tower before God and wait for God to give him an answer to his problem. I am a strong believer in going to God with our problems and staying there. I had often wondered when I read the Bible where all these towers came from. Jesus spoke about what man building a tower. What towers are they building?

One day I was invited to visit the American consulate in Damascus. They had a chapel for the different consulate officials to speak to them. I came up from Jerusalem and went to Damascus. Our consulate official took me around for a day to go out into the

countryside. There for the first time, I had the answer to my question. What were these towers in the Bible? We were outside Damascus, and I would say that from any given position you could see several of these towers. I took a good look. I would judge they were 6 by 6 feet, 16 to 18 feet high, a room at the top with wooden pegs coming out from the wall so a man could go up there to watch their fields, to rest at noon or sleep overnight. I think that is the kind of a tower referred to here in Habakkuk. The prophet has decided that he's going up there to go before God and wait before Him until God gives him an answer. I have studies that I give on Waiting For God, on how to wait for God for a specific objective. Apparently this man had the secret.

I go overseas, and I go every year. Often I set aside a whole week somewhere in a hotel to fast and pray and wait on God. Last year it was in New Zealand. Nobody in the world knows where I am. I shut myself up with God and present myself before the Lord. Sometimes that includes the getting from God some kind of a solution to specific problems. It's a wonderful thing to go before God. This man did, and in verse 2 it says, "*And the Lord answered me, and said,*" etc.

Down in verse 4 it says, "*The just shall live by his faith.*" I'm cutting corners because of time, you understand. Now, let's recapitulate a bit. The man had a burden. He was bowed down. He was troubled by three questions representing three problems:

- 1) How long? The problem of unanswered prayer.
- 2) Why? The problem of God's failure to interfere in the ways of the wicked.
- 3) Wherefore? Represents the problem of the suffering of the righteous at the hands of the ungodly.

God is answering this man. God is not answering Habakkuk's questions. He bypasses his questions and answers to his need, to his problem. God does not give him an explanation of the working of His providence. God is asking this man to have confidence in the unimpeachable integrity of Almighty God. "*The just shall live by faith,*" and I'm following the Hebrew now, "*in the faithfulness of God.*"

God is not answering his why, his how long, his wherefore. God is saying in effect, "*Habakkuk, you don't need the answers to your questions. Those answers will not solve the problem, for the solution of your problem does not lie in an explanation of it, but in faith in the unimpeachable integrity of God.*" A faith that will say perhaps like Job of old, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust him,*" or the statement of another, "*Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?*"

You see, God seeks to raise our belief in God to a higher level of faith in God, not because of what He does, but because of who He is. Some people believe in God because of what He does, but God wants to elevate our faith unto a higher level where we can believe in God in spite of what He does or doesn't do. Can you see the difference? This is the upper level of faith that God sought and did impart to this prophet.

A little child, who was prayed for, for years, dies after 4 weeks. Now this kind of faith does not question and say, “*Lord, why did You, why did You, why did You?*” This faith says, “*God, Thou doest all things well. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Lord, I’ve prayed for healing for so long, but I’m not going to question Your promises, Though He slay me, yet will I trust him.*” Oh, this is a rare faith.

Now this man got the answer, and we’ll have to turn toward the end to get it. Notice the last chapter, verse 17. Notice the difference in tone. The prophet is not depressed, he’s not down, he’s not perplexed, he’s no longer burdened, he has no more questions. Out of his mouth now comes a remarkable utterance.

**“Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.”** Habakkuk 3:17-19

*“Although the fig tree shall not blossom,”* in other words, even though the bank account is down to zero. Even though everything goes wrong, even though there is a drought and the produce of the land has died, even though the house burns down (that’s going too far isn’t it), even though the bank account is empty, YET, “*I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*”

What God is doing here is to get this man to derive his joy not from what God does, but from what God is. Because no matter what God permits or doesn’t permit, He’s still the same God. And God seeks to lift the basis of our joy, the source of our joy away from what He does (even His blessings) to what He is, “*I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*”

The other week, one church gave my wife a gift, a check for \$1,750 to go with me this summer in ministry around the world. Well, that girl was happy, believe you me, and so was I. Yet God wants to lift up our joy at the source into Himself. Do you know what she said to me? A few days later she said, “*Daddy, I don’t care whether I go or not. All I want is to be in the center of the will of God whether it’s Australia or right back here in Pennsylvania.*” Her joy was in the Lord, and that check, while awfully nice, really doesn’t mean that much because there are higher values - the character of God Himself.

*“The Lord God is my strength.”* He derives his faith now from God Himself. This is the strength of faith, and the other is the joy of faith. “*He will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.*” This is now the walk of faith, not on the basis of what God does, but on the basis of what God is.

You know in the Himalayans there are mountain goats. Goats with long hind legs, very well equipped to make them sure-footed in the mountains. The mountain lion likes to have breakfast, dinner and supper on mountain goat. He goes after those goats, but those

goats run uphill where the lion is at a disadvantage. The goats have the advantage of long hind legs. These goats can jump over crevices that the lion cannot get across. By faith in the integrity of God in spite of what He does or doesn't do, permits or doesn't permit, we are able to escape the lion of our soul and run uphill and over cliffs where other animals would perish, by keeping faith in the integrity of God in spite of everything else.

*"To the chief singer on my stringed instruments."* Now the prophet is singing. His circumstances are not changed, but he is changed. You see, God goes after us.

I was a pastor once for a number of years and had a lady who was the trial of my life. I was a young preacher. On Sunday morning, I'd find a note, *"Brother Beuttler, let's sing song No. so and so. Don't forget to do this, and I suggest you have a special and ...."* Every Sunday I had my instructions and it got under my skin, it got my goat. Why doesn't the Lord appoint her to be pastor?

One day I had it. One Sunday morning I went back upstairs and knelt down. I said, *"Father, will You please get this sister out of this church and send her somewhere else. She's getting my goat."*

And the Lord spoke, *"If you didn't have a goat, she couldn't get it."* (Clapping & laughter) I never forgot that. *"If you didn't have a goat, she couldn't get it."*

To bring things together, here are the extremes: the burden, the song. In the middle of it, God shares with this great man His secret, which automatically dissolves his questions without answering them, for his need did not lie in an answer to his questions. His need was a greater faith and confidence in an Almighty God, so that he could believe in the justice, the righteousness, and the immutability of his God, and put all his joy, his peace, and all his faith in the character of God in spite of what God does or doesn't do.

When he got the point, he experienced a transformation so that at the end of this book, he could sing. We do not have any circumstances that were changed. We have a prophet that was changed by the word of God in the middle of his circumstances. Now he asks no more: How long? Why? Wherefore? He says in effect, *"Nothing matters any more but God."* God changed a burdened prophet into a singing prophet. This is God's secret of turning our burdens into a song.

What secret: Faith in the integrity of Almighty God in spite of what He does or doesn't do. Habakkuk says in effect, *"Nothing at hand, and nothing in sight, yet I will praise the Lord."* Praise the Lord!