

Life's not fair! In his book, *Your God is Too Safe*, Pastor Mark Buchanan shares this heart moving account: *"In the town where I live, a little girl is dying. Her name is Kaitlyn. My daughter Sarah attended preschool with Kaitlyn, and on the days when I picked Sarah up, I would often find her and Kaitlyn playing together at the swing set, pushing one another in great stomach-fluttering arcs, or in the sandbox, piling pail upon pail of crumbly sand into a kind of replica of a ruined acropolis. They were two vigorous, joyful 4-year-olds. Kaitlyn's mother, Bonnie, came to pick her up one day, and something was terribly awry. Bonnie wrote this to me:*

'Have you ever had a day that you know has changed your life forever, a day that you would do anything to black out, just fast-forward past? I arrived at the preschool. Kaitlyn was standing in the playground, looking down at the grass. One of her playmates said several times, "Kaitlyn, your mommy is here." I spoke to her, and there was no reaction, so I approached her and lifted her chin up with my finger. When I did this, I realized something was wrong. Her eyes were vacant, and she had no recognition of me. I immediately called for the preschool teacher. Kaitlyn began to waver. I knelt down beside her and laid her across my lap. The teacher called her name and did other things to get her to respond. Her eyes were open but not focused; they rolled to the right. She remained limp. The ambulance was called. I carried her inside and started to lay her on her side. When I did this, she began to cry and call for mommy. When the paramedics arrived, I was holding her and kissing her and weeping. We were taken to the hospital by ambulance...I was told she had a seizure but she would be fine. Tests were ordered. The tests agreed with the initial diagnosis: Kaitlyn would be fine.'

But Kaitlyn wasn't fine. She grew increasingly pale. Her speech started to slur, and she began to fumble things, stumble often. She got more and more clumsy. She couldn't hold things. She walked into walls and doorjamb, and she fell down a lot. Her speech worsened—words started coming out in guttural chunks, in sharp jagged howls, in throaty grunts, in mournful groans. The doctor kept ordering tests. Then one day, Kaitlyn's mother and father got the news that they dreaded and expected: Kaitlyn is dying. She has Batten's disease, a rare and incurable congenital degenerative neural disorder. Her muscles are petrifying. They are now hard like wood; they will soon be hard like stone. They will harden until one day she can no longer swallow or breathe. Kaitlyn's parents, her brother, her grandparents, her aunts and uncles and cousins, her friends, her church family—all watch beautiful little Kaitlyn die a slow death, and they can do nothing. Kaitlyn's mother is a Christian and has drenched her bed with tears. She has beaten her fists bloody on heaven's door, trying to get the owner to open it and give her bread. She attends a church full of godly, caring people. They pray. Other people at other churches pray. They pray for many things—strength for the parents, wisdom for the doctors, comfort for Kaitlyn. But mostly they pray that God will heal Kaitlyn. God hasn't answered that prayer yet. In truth, few now think he will.

The people who live beside Kaitlyn won the lottery. More than \$600,000. I know almost nothing about these people, except that they have a lovely house. The house, I am told,

is already paid for. It has been for a long time. These people, I understand, had a good, abundant life even before their jackpot win. I'm not sure why they buy lottery tickets or, if they don't, why others buy lottery tickets for them. I'm not sure if they ever prayed to win the lottery or if they ever pray at all. But they won the lottery. More than \$600,000. And, in the house next door, Kaitlyn is dying."

Life isn't fair! There's a lopsidedness and randomness to its distribution of windfalls and pitfalls and pratfalls. Who will get sick? Who will get rich? Who will be beautiful? Who will be disfigured? Is there any sovereign logic to this? And sometimes—and this is more puzzling, more troubling—the lopsidedness doesn't seem random: it seems calculated, a cosmic booby-trapping of someone's life. Life isn't fair. But have you ever taken that statement up to the next level. Have you ever thought: God's not fair! Have you ever cried out to heaven, **"God that's not fair!"** If you have, you're not alone...in fact, you're in good company. Some three millennia ago Habakkuk the Prophet cried out to God and essentially said, **"God that's not fair!"** The prophet Habakkuk wrestled with the seeming unfairness of God. He's unique among the prophets in that he did not, in his written message, speak for God to the people, but rather spoke to God about his struggles over these basic human questions. Why does God allow evil to go unchecked, especially when the righteous cry out to Him for justice? Turn to Habakkuk 1:12-2:1 (p. 663).

In our passage we see that Habakkuk has a problem. He'd lived the earlier part of his life during a period of national revival. One of Judah's rare good kings, Josiah, had implemented reforms within the nation. There had been a nationwide revival during his reign. But King Josiah was tragically killed in battle before he was even forty and with his untimely death, the nation soon began to forsake the ways that had been established under his rule. So, Habakkuk not only saw a period of national revival, he also saw a period of national decline. The book begins with Habakkuk, during that time of decline, crying out, *"How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen?"* Habakkuk wanted God to do something.

In our last study of Habakkuk we saw (vss. 5-11) that God answered Habakkuk's prayer by revealing what He was going to do. God said, "I have a plan; and my plan is on schedule. I'm going to raise up the wicked Babylonians. They're going to march their war machine through Judah, and this wicked nation, Babylon, will be a rod of chastisement in My hand, as I deal with My chosen people, the nation of Judah."

That was not the message that Habakkuk wanted to hear. God's answer only created more problems and raised even more serious questions in Habakkuk's heart. It was bad enough that before God seemed indifferent and inactive, now it appeared that God was inconsistent. How could a holy God use a horrible nation like Babylon to punish the people of Judah who were, after all, God's covenant people? As Habakkuk wrestled with this seeming inconsistency on the part of God, he argues with God and tries to change God's mind, yet before we criticize Habakkuk for doing this, let's be honest, how many times have we done the same thing? How many times have we thought that God was unfair, or at least inconsistent? We see the godly suffering but the ungodly

prospering. We see the children of wicked people, experiencing health, wealth and prosperity, yet our own children sometimes suffer sickness and terrible trials.

Habakkuk was wrestling with God. Remember that his name means “the embracer” or “the wrestler.” He wrestles with what seems to him to be the unfairness of God. How could God do this to His own people?

You’ll meet a lot of people who struggle with the unfairness of God. Maybe today you’re one of them. Many of them, because they felt that God was unfair, have pulled the plug on God in their lives.

Habakkuk is confused by God’s answer that He is going to use the Babylonians to accomplish His will. At the same time he trusts God, even when he is complaining to God about God. Habakkuk’s complaint is divided into three parts. **First**, we find a statement of deep faith in the character of God – who God is. Habakkuk still trusts God despite his perplexity. In a sea of confusion Habakkuk clung to the life buoy of the holy character of God. In a chaotic storm, the prophet grasped the rock of his steadfast Lord. **Secondly**, though Habakkuk questions God’s means of judgment in the light of apparent contradictions and God’s nature, Habakkuk does not doubt. His is not a struggle with a weak faith but a perplexed faith torments Habakkuk. **Finally**, Habakkuk waits for God to answer. All is done boldly and with reverence. If you’re taking notes...

1. Habakkuk expresses his great confidence in Who God is, vss. 12-13a *“O LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. O LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; O Rock, you have ordained them to punish. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.”*

Scuba diving instructors tell their charges to “feel the bubbles.” When it’s pitch black and you have no idea which way to go, you reach up with your hand and feel the bubbles. Air bubbles always drift up to the surface. When you can’t trust your feelings or judgment, you can always trust the bubbles to get you back to the top. When we aren’t sure what to trust, we can always trust God. That’s where Habakkuk starts. Though Habakkuk is really struggling with the *what* of God, he has no problem with the *WHO* of God. He doesn’t understand what God is doing but he knows who God is. Habakkuk knew his Bible. Habakkuk’s a good theologian. He knew what God was like. What we have here is a digest of theology.

One reason many Christians stumble during trials is that we’re such poor theologians. We succumb to “I think God is like.” Brett Kunkle shares of asking some Jr Highers what they thought God was like: “God is like a three-headed dragon,” offered one. “I think God is like a Transformer,” blurted out another in the front row. While those might be acceptable answers for Jr Highers, the problem is that the contemporary church is so theologically ignorant, many adult Christians would not do much better. Friend, what will get you through the inevitable trials that come your way, just as they did Habakkuk, is that you must know Who God is.

a. Habakkuk knows that God is eternally consistent, “O LORD, are you not from everlasting?” My buddy, Pastor Vic Koshir, when dealing with a church dilemma, often says, “It’s hard to be consistent.” While that’s true for us, it’s not the case with God. God is eternal. Eternity is not time lengthened out; eternity is that realm in which God lives. God is not controlled or limited by time. In fact, God created time. That means that God extends beyond vanishing points, from horizon to horizon – God is still there. That means from your birth to your death, God has been there the whole time. Before the Garden of Eden, before the Creation – God was there. When this universe finally expires, God will still be there. 2 Peter 3:8 says, “*With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*”

The result is that God is never surprised, He’s already been there. Habakkuk is worried about temporal problems – the Babylonians. God was there when Babylon was a few wandering nomadic tribes and He’ll be there when Babylon is dumped out on the rubbish heap of history.

But it’s not just that God is eternal or that God has been around a really long time, Habakkuk uses God’s covenant name, “O LORD.” He’s dealing with the very nature of God. This is the God who promised to be with His people. As God has been in the past, He will be in the future. It’s not just that God is eternal, it’s that God is eternally faithful. That elicits confident dependence from those who call on the name of the Lord.

Just 65 years ago, on this very day – May 9th, the German surrender was being ratified by the Allies in Rheims, France. When was the last time that you gave serious thought about the German surrender? But God was there and it was huge for that generation. So friend, what’s big in your life today? God is there – has been there and will be there. As He has taken care of all of His people in the past, He will take care of you and all of His people today and tomorrow. Our **God is eternally consistent.** Do believe God is eternally consistent?

b. Habakkuk knows that God is holy. He refers to God as “*my Holy One*” (vs. 12). To be holy is to be distinct, separate, in a class by oneself. The primary meaning of holy is “separate.” It comes from an ancient word that meant “to cut,” or “to separate.” Perhaps even more accurate would be the phrase “a cut above something.” When we find a product or some piece of merchandise that is outstanding, that has a superior excellence, we use the expression that it is “a cut above the rest.” Most of us don’t drive superior cars. There aren’t any Lamborghinis in the parking lot. A Lamborghini Reventon costs \$1.6 million. It takes 3.3 seconds to reach 60 mph with a top speed of 211 mph. There are just 20 of them in the world, which is one of the reasons why they’re so expensive.

To be holy means that the One who is holy is uniquely holy, with no rivals or competition. When the Bible calls God holy it means primarily that God is transcendently separate. He is so far above and beyond us that He seems almost totally foreign to us. To be holy is to be “other,” to be different in a special way. That’s

what Exodus 15:11 is saying, *“Who among the gods is like You, O LORD? Who is like You—majestic in holiness...”*

To be holy is to be morally pure. When things are made holy, they’re set apart unto purity and to be used in a pure way. Purity is not excluded from the idea of the holy; it’s contained within it. Verse 13 alludes to this, *“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrong.”*

While Habakkuk was concerned with the holiness of God, sadly the word *holy* today is closely akin to the term “nerd.” God calls us, as Christians to be holy. We must also be particularly concerned with the holiness of God. Too often holiness is not thought of as a virtue but as a vice. How insulting to be thought of as “holy” by your peers. Even in the church, holiness is rare. We are to be holy in every aspect of our conduct. Holiness is not to be compartmentalized into certain “religious” areas of our life. It’s a way of life that affects everything we do. It’s a lifestyle, rather than mere conformity to a list of rules. Just as God is holy, we are commanded to be holy. *“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do”* (1 Peter 1:14-15). Friend, are you seeking to be holy?

c. Habakkuk knows that God is faithful. The next statement Habakkuk makes seems arrogant if not at the very least, presumptuous – *“we will not die.”* What’s Habakkuk saying? The situation seems hopeless. It appears Israel will be blotted off of the earth but Habakkuk remembers God’s covenant with His people. God promised Abraham, *“I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing”* (Gen. 12:22).

As the Allied armies marched across Europe, they were horrified as the truth of the Holocaust came to light. The Nazis had established about 20,000 camps to imprison and exterminate millions of victims; places like Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau. Who would have dreamed that a mere three years later, on May 14, 1948, the State of Israel would be born as Israel proclaimed independence as a nation?

Is God faithful? You and I see it every day on the news with the nation of Israel. That same God is our God! Being faithful means being trustworthy. You can trust God, He has a track record that you can follow. He has always been and will always be faithful. You can count on God to do what He says He will do. Friend, do you trust Him?

d. Habakkuk knows that God is His security. Habakkuk believed in “rock theology,” *“O Rock.”* Rock is a common term for God in the Old Testament. A rock is a picture of permanence, stability and security. In the midst of a world of danger, God is a safe place. What an encouragement to know that we have a place to flee for safety in times of trial and testing. Habakkuk knows that *“the Rock”* is a protector of the covenant people. He’s our protector too. Friend, are you resting in His protection?

2. Habakkuk expresses his grievous concern about what God is doing, vss. 13-17 *“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; You cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do You tolerate the treacherous? Why are You silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler. The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad. Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food. Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?”*

Habakkuk points out that “God’s cure is worse than the disease.” His first problem was that God was doing nothing. Now, he says, the problem is worse: God is doing the wrong thing. How can God use a nation of wicked idolaters to discipline His people? The Babylonians were a cruel nation. That’s his complaint, *“Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?”* (vs. 13). But he already knew the answer. Nearly 1000 years earlier when Israel entered the Promised Land, God promised that if they turned from Him, He’d chasten them...just as He is doing in Habakkuk.

Turn to Deuteronomy 28:**25** (p. 145), *“The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. (vss. 32-34) Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand. A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labor produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. The sights you see will drive you mad. (v. 36) The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. (vss. 49-50) The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young.”*

God always keeps His Word! He always keeps His promises...whether they are for blessing or judgment. Habakkuk though is wrestling with a major theological problem – How does God use a very, very wicked people to judge a wicked people? Habakkuk knows that God cannot tolerate sin so how does He use a sinful people to judge His own people for sinning?

I don’t know how God does it but He does. It’s a pattern repeated over and over again in Scripture. God uses Pharaoh to rebuke Abraham for his lying and lack of faith (Gen. 12). We see this in the book of Judges. After Christ’s resurrection the Romans would be used by God to destroy Jerusalem because they continued to reject Jesus as the Messiah.

They’re the same questions we struggle with. All of us would admit that America has problems but we’re still a “Christian” nation. So how does God allow Islamic terrorists to

blow up our people? Why are Christians persecuted but terrorists have rights? Just a few weeks ago, Evangelist Shawn Holes was preaching to a crowd in Glasgow. In Scotland, they often preach in the public square. Some same-sex couples asked him what he thought about homosexuality. It wasn't the first time this question had come up. In fact, Shawn Holes has had it asked frequently, so he answered, "Your homosexuality is the least of your problems. Your problem is your heart." He added that homosexuality is a sin deserving of hell but that all sinners, including himself, deserve God's wrath but are offered salvation. But that statement got him arrested. He spent the night in jail and was fined \$1500. Britain has a new "homophobic hatred" law. Violation of this law can carry a sentence of up to seven years in jail. So while it is "right" to be a homosexual in Britain, it is now wrong to say it is wrong.

Habakkuk asks the same questions that we do. There's a disconnection between his understanding of who God is and how God is acting.

a. Habakkuk doesn't understand the seemingly inconsistency of God, "Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?" (vs. 13b). In essence Habakkuk is saying, "We're bad BUT we're not as bad as ____." Who's in your "I'm not as bad as ____"? It's a shell game that goes all the way back to the Garden. Adam said, "I'm bad but I'm not as bad as Eve." Eve said, "I'm bad but I'm not as bad as the snake." It's like that classic line from *Confessions of a Shopaholic*: "Yes, I'm a shopaholic. No, I'm not as bad as Ms. Bloomwood." Most will admit that we're sinners: gossips, proud, hotheaded, materialistic, BUT we're not as bad as ____.

Habakkuk is questioning how God can use the "less righteous" to chasten the "less wicked." But God had been warning them for over 150 years. He'd already sent the Ten Northern tribes into captivity – what would it take to get their attention? Don't we do the same thing? God brings correction into our lives and we argue, "Lord, what about so and so? They are really baaaaad!" Or, "why do I have tough times but so and so is godless but apparently blessed?"

Parents with a wayward child will question why their godless neighbor has good kids? **It seems like God is inconsistent.** We must learn that with God there are not varying degrees of sinfulness. There is only sinfulness and righteousness.

b. Habakkuk doesn't understand the laxity of God in allowing the cruel to attack the vulnerable, "You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler. The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad" (vss. 14-15). This may be a reference to a Babylonian sculpture in which Babylonian gods are depicted as holding a net in which conquered people are trapped. Fish are helpless. They do not organize to protect or defend themselves. They have no leader.

The picture is of needless slaughter, much as we saw in the Rwandan Genocide. During the 1994 mass killing of approximately 100 days, a million people were slain,

nearly 20% of the total population. Habakkuk can't understand how God permits such inhumanity to be perpetrated. This wasn't the destiny for which God created man. He was to rule over the fish not be like them: helpless, vulnerable, without a protector.

"*Hooks*" is not symbolic. The Babylonians put hooks through the lower lip of their captives, as they marched them off into slavery. Habakkuk was asking, "Lord, is life that cheap? Are people so inconsequential to You that You allow the Babylonians to swoop down on them and enslave them or worse?" This shows the helplessness of people.

But God knows that they've already been hooked and enslaved by their own sin. They're already trapped by their own wickedness.

c. Habakkuk doesn't understand God using idolaters to accomplish His purposes, "*Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food*" (v. 16). Mankind worships that which gives him what he wants. We worship relationships, careers, possessions, etc. Babylon was no different. They worshipped their strength. They sacrificed to their gods of war because in war they received what they wanted; in war, the wealth of nations spilled over into the coffers of Babylon. Babylon was one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world boasting nearly 1200 temples to its many gods. They gave their gods credit for their military victories.

Idolatry has been defined as "*trusting people, possessions or positions to do for me what only God can do.*" It can be worship of self, as seen in that line from *Invictus*: "*I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.*" We erroneously think idolatry is bowing before statues of Buddha. We have American idols and it's not a TV show. We have our idols in the Church. We're not that different from the Babylonians. Ours aren't as blatant but we worship money, power and success. We think that money gives us "God," and don't truly believe that God gives us our money.

Let me illustrate. If this afternoon someone from a government agency came by your house and they told you, "Mr. ___...Mrs. ___, you have to make a choice. You have to either give up your church or your job. Which one is it going to be?" Most Christians would give up their church without batting an eye. Their thinking would be, "I can always find another church...but I have to have this job to survive." Isn't that idolatry? So friend, faced with that decision – what would you do?

d. Habakkuk doesn't understand why God allows senseless violence, "*Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?*" (v. 17). The Babylonians killed to kill, not to conquer. The picture is of a fisherman catching more fish than he'll ever need, chopping them up and just dumping them. It's wild animals in a feeding frenzy. It is violence begetting violence. And the One person in the universe who can end it, is instead using this vicious group of tyrants to accomplish His will and purposes....and Habakkuk is asking "Why God?"

3. Habakkuk waits for a reply from God, *“I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what He will say to me, and what answer I am to give to this complaint”* (2:1). It was everyone’s nightmare. At 15,000 feet Edmund Gravely died at the controls of his small plane. He and his wife were on their way to Statesboro, Georgia, from the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport in North Carolina. His wife, Janice, did not know how to fly. But she managed to keep the plane in the air for two hours. During that time period she continually radioed for help. Several Air Traffic Controllers heard her screaming, “Help! Help! Won’t someone help me? My husband and pilot is unconscious.” But there was a serious problem keeping her from getting help, a problem she didn’t even realize. Although the authorities could hear her distress calls, they weren’t able to reach her by radio. *Why?* Because she kept changing the channels. She wouldn’t wait long enough at any channel for a response from a Controller.

Waiting is one of the hardest things to do in life, particularly in our spiritual life...especially during a time of crisis. No one likes to wait. The word “wait” has got to be the Christian’s four letter word. Wouldn’t you rather do anything than wait? Some would rather do the wrong thing than wait. Most of you have heard the American Prayer: “Lord, give me patience—and I want it right now!”

Habakkuk, though struggling with God – waits. In our relationship with God -- waiting is often the rule rather than the exception in life. Habakkuk knew what it meant to wait on God. Like all of us, during the tough times in life, he’s very tempted to switch the channels. But he resisted that temptation. In doing so he models for us how to conduct ourselves when we don’t understand what God is doing. Don’t react...wait!

The determination *“to stand watch”* alludes to patience. Patience is a forward look with an upward gaze. Patience remembers the ownership of God on the project at hand and digs deep to please the Lord in whatever is undertaken for Him. If it is God’s work, it has His results and His guarantee, but it requires our faithful patience to continue when logic, convenience, and desire may shout demands to quit. Patience listens to the voice of God and perseveres.

Conclusion: Have you been arguing with God? Have you, like Habakkuk, been questioning what He’s doing? Habakkuk’s perspective is too limited. He was looking for the punishment of the wicked so that the prosperity of his people could be assured. But God, who knew the end from the beginning, looked for the punishment of Habakkuk’s people so that they could be restored to fellowship with Him. In time, God would lead His prophet to that perspective. Habakkuk learns to trust God.

Friend, don’t argue with God. Instead listen to Him, let Him speak to you through His Word. Trust Him, and God will work it all out in His time.

Life isn't fair. We've been taught a lie, "If you do what is right, it will go well with you." What will go well? We'd like for that to mean that God will stay the hand of death, disease, accident, injury and illness, always, everywhere, right to the sweet gentle end, for me and those I love, and then that He will whisk us Enoch-like to heaven. I would

like it to mean that the rapists and serial killers and genocidal despots are brought to swift, unswerving justice. I'd like it to mean that a little four year old named Kaitlyn lived a long and healthy life, marrying at 23, having three children, burying her parents when they are in their 80s, retiring after a productive and fulfilling life of teaching or stone-sculpting or genetic research, dying in her sleep in her early 90s, still mobile, her own children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren gathering to mourn her and celebrate her and sing hymns over her.

But it doesn't mean that, does it? The idyllic, undisturbed life. It might happen. It probably won't. And that's not important to whether it "goes well with you." God's definition of it going well is unique, distinct, almost eccentric compared to ours. His definition of wellness is not about health, finances, or job security. It's not about unflinching protection from the vagaries and dangers of a broken world. And it's not about life being fair.

It's about **faith**. It's about acceptance. It's about God accepting us as His own, the one He loves. It's not about being spared from untimely or difficult death. It's about being spared the "second death"—the death of unbridgeable separation, the death that is at once coldness and burning, oblivion and torment and the desolation of unending aloneness.

Because of Jesus Christ, we have received God's unmerited favor. That favor has always been unmerited. If we do what is right, it will go well with us. The right thing is **faith**—to have faith in the one who doesn't always remedy life's unfairness but who does far better: He redeems it—its unfairness, its brokenness, its disease and death—and He gives us back sevenfold all the years the locusts have eaten. "Today," he says to repentant thieves on crosses, to trusting Abels, to dying little four year old girls, *"Today you will be with me in paradise."* Ultimately, we are citizens of heaven and eagerly await a Savior from there. But meanwhile, in the shadowlands, we walk by faith and not by sight. Meanwhile, like Habakkuk, those who walk by faith discover that life rarely gets easier. It often gets harder.

Safe? Who ever said God was safe? Fair? Who said God was fair? But if you walk and don't faint, you find what Job did—though He slay me, yet will I trust him. You find that the God who walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death is infinitely better than the dull, safe god who lulls us to sleep, seducing us with false comforts, spinning a cocoon around us that doesn't protect, only entraps, and from which we emerge wingless.

Let me quote, Bonnie, Kaitlyn's mother, again as we close: *"God is doing a mighty work through this little girl. Why she has to be sick for it to happen is not for me to understand. All I know is that out of her life Jesus Christ shines. And those that dare to get close to her can't help but see it. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4)."* My friend, life isn't fair. But for those who live by faith—Abel and Abraham, Kaitlyn and Bonnie, Habakkuk and you and me—it is well, it is well with their souls.