

NOW WAIT A MINUTE GOD!**Habakkuk 1:1-2:1**

Intro: Let's see, we're nine days into 2022, how many of you made New Year's resolutions? How many of you have kept them?

I read this meme the other day: *"May your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions."*

I don't think I ever really made New Year's resolutions, but if I did, they probably didn't last very long. Besides, what is it I should I be working on in the New Year, that I wasn't working on the day before on December 31st? I know it sounds cynical, but really it's true.

The truth is, maybe what we need instead of resolutions is a reboot. Let me explain:

How often have you been stymied by a problem on your cell phone, and then someone asks "Have you restarted it? And you think, *"Oh why didn't I think of that?"* as you press the restart button or turn the device off and quickly start it again. And voilà! The problem is gone.

I know that most of you know the term, but that's called rebooting. It's something that would have been a completely foreign concept prior to the computer age. Now, when we have a problem with our computer or phone or smart TV, or even your late model car that has some annoying light saying something is malfunctioning in the engine – you just reboot. So often problems are solved when the computer is not working right by just turning it off and starting it back up again and the problem goes away. Just think, rebooting computers could save humanity millions of dollars each year. Of course computer repair people wouldn't have as much work, which is if, before they begin their \$100 per hour repair they don't simply ask. *"Did you try rebooting?"*

This happened to me just the other day. Friday morning I sat down to my computer and fired it up, ready to finish write this sermon, **AND NOTHING WAS AS IT SHOULD BE!** I was greeted with a new screen. The opening screen picture of my grandkids that never fails to make me smile, was not there. My internet browser was not there, replaced by a browser I didn't want to use.

You see, I had loaded an antivirus upgrade onto it on Thursday and so I figured that something happened when I shut it down. So I set about changing the browser back and changing some passwords and everything would be good as new, right? **WRONG!**

I didn't know how wrong things were until I went to open up my sermon file. Nothing was there.

Nothing!

NADA!!!!!!

ALL MY FILES WERE GONE!

That means all my pictures were gone too! My file of 8,000+ pictures – including the one of my grandkids that makes me smile every time, **GONE!** Every document in my Word files, every sermon, every report, every funeral, every wedding. **GONE!**

To my credit, I didn't panic. Much. But I did call for Mary because she knows her way around computers. She came down to my office and she did a few things. She even found my sermons and my old files. So she put them into my menu or whatever it's called. And then I tried to pull up a photo, for some reason, I don't remember why, maybe I just wanted to make sure it worked. And it told me I needed some kind of new app that we didn't know about. It was very puzzling and I was starting to get a little bit worried about my 8,000 pictures. Mary even researched it on Google and found out what people were saying, but no matter what she tried, nothing would work.

Well, all was not lost, I could work on my sermon since she had found that file, and I really didn't need pictures. And I didn't have time to be messing around with that anyway. And then as Mary sat there at my computer, she said *"Maybe you ought to try rebooting."*

I was a little bit skeptical of that. We had just found my documents so I didn't want to lose them again, not at least until I got my sermon done for Sunday morning. But I thought, *"Oh, maybe we should try it."* So I told her go ahead and reboot it, which she did and **EVERYTHING** came back! Everything that I thought was missing, was there. It was like nothing had happened. We had spent hours at that point messing with that computer and all it took was a reboot!

We Christ followers walk around frustrated, worried, and lost, when all we really need is a reboot. I'm here to say rebooting is as old as the scripture. But let me say this is not a New Year's sermon and it's not about making

resolutions. This is about restarting and rebooting our walk with Jesus Christ. And it's not just one talk – it's a journey through the Bible as we learn how men and women of God were rebooted. Today I'll begin by looking at Habakkuk – and we're going to spend the next two or three Sundays with him. After that we will see how Rahab was rebooted from a prostitute to a progenitor of the Messiah. After that we will look at how Elijah was rebooted from despair to Glory. After that we will see how King David was rebooted from a murderous adulterer to a man after God's own heart. Late next month we will look at how Peter was rebooted from a blunderer to a bold proclaimer of the Good News. Finally we will see how Paul was rebooted from a persecutor of Christ Followers to a preacher of Following Christ. We may look at some others, but I pray that we learn early and often that in this confusing world we need to walk in consistency and in faith and to do that we need to allow the Lord to transform us by our own unique rebooting process.

This has been a long intro – but it is an intro to what we will be doing for the next eight weeks or more. So bear with me and let's introduce Habakkuk and see how far we get today.

(Read Habakkuk 1:1-2:1)

Habakkuk is considered a Minor Prophet. That means he doesn't get as much press as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, but his message is just as major! It is as relevant for today as it was in 600 BC.

His ministry was somewhere in the last quarter of the 7th century BC into the first quarter of the 6th century BC and he was probably a contemporary of the prophets Nahum, Zephaniah, Obadiah, and Jeremiah.

It was a very ominous time for Judah. The world was in an uproar and Judah was right in the middle of the mess since, geographically, they were a crossroad between warring empires. The horrific Assyrian empire, whom we know about from the book of Jonah, was overthrown by the Chaldeans (shown on the map as Babylonia) whose empire soon stretched as far west as Egypt.

Even though the world was a mess, not nearly all the trouble was outside-in. As we can see right from the start from what I just read to you Judah had big problems of their own. Under King Hezekiah things had been looking up. He had made some reforms that brought God's people back into line with God's plan. But when his son, Manasseh, became king, everything fell apart – or should I say, he tore things apart. Manasseh is known for idol worship and the horrible practices of child sacrifice, among other evils. It only went downhill from there, even with some reforms brought about by the King Josiah.

Things were deteriorating. Fast!

Into this comes Habakkuk, who like other prophets, was perplexed by God's handling of his people. His question was, how could God allow such evil? Why had he stood by and done nothing? Habakkuk is, in reality, seeking the answer to the profound theological question that has perplexed each generation . . .

If God really exists, why does he allow violence, wrong and injustice?

- It's a good question, and a very valid question, at that.
- Habakkuk is very specific and very pointed in his cry to God. In fact he's practically accusatory. "I cry out for help and you will not hear! I cry "Violence!" and you don't save! Why do you idly look at wrong? You never do justice!" You **WILL not** hear! You **DON'T** save! You **IDLY** look at wrong! You **NEVER** do justice! These are strong words aimed at the Almighty. Strong, wrong and when it comes down to it, unfair. But that's the beauty of our relationship to God – he can take it. The truth is, nevertheless, Habakkuk did the right thing – when most of the people around him were oblivious to the sin and injustice around them – Habakkuk looked to the only source of deliverance. Even if his questions were pointed and his accusations were unfounded, he still knew he could safely go to God with them.
- But he was wrong. Jay Taylor, commenting on this, writes, "*Though right in his concerns and commendable for his prayerful actions, Habakkuk was wrong, however, in his assumptions concerning God's response to his plea. He assumed that God did not hear him. . . . He also concluded that God had decided not to do anything about the evil in Judah. He assumed that God was idly sitting on the sidelines. Why did Habakkuk make these assumptions and come to these conclusions? He was limited by his concept of time. Habakkuk was not the first person to cry to God for help. God, in times past, heard the groanings of the people of Israel in Egypt (Exodus 2:23-25). He heard the plea of the psalmist (Psalms 6:8, 9). God, throughout human history, has heard the cries of his people and acted. God acts, however, on his time schedule. Habakkuk was also limited in his knowledge. God was not sitting idly on the sidelines looking at*

sinful behavior. He was in the process of doing something about the wickedness in Judah. Habakkuk's assumptions were wrong. His complaints did not fall on deaf ears. God did know about the violence, havoc, and iniquity in Judah. He also determined to do something about it. What God determined for Judah, however, would astound and bewilder Habakkuk."

- We need to pick up God's response to Habakkuk's first complaint next week since we are out of time today. Let me say in conclusion that God's response was not to Habakkuk's t wasn't to his liking and not what he expecting. Suffice it to say right now, our rebooting process happens when we care enough to go to God with our struggles, concerns and questions. We need to know that the answers are with him. They aren't in a self-help book or by thinking positive thoughts – transformation comes from God alone.
- Ponder that, and we will hear more next week.
- By the way, Habakkuk is 56 verses long – you could read it daily with ease. Just sayin' . . . Amen.