

Intro:

"The glory of God is in his character." [128]¹ Moses said, "Show me your glory." (Ex 33.18)

Ex 33.19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My **goodness** pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

And then the next day as God came to cut his commandments in the stones Moses prepared, God declared (Ex 34.5-7)

Ex 34.5-7 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. ⁶ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, **compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;** ⁷ who keeps **lovingkindness** for thousands, who **forgives** iniquity, transgression and sin; **yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished**, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

In God's character, there *is* judgement — but consider which qualities God listed first.

The Song of Moses:

Dt 32.4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

Paul's affirmation in 2 Timothy:

2 Tim 2.13 If we are faithless, He remains **faithful**, for He cannot **deny Himself**.

To what is God faithful? He is faithful to faithless people, but not because of their quality. Notice: "He cannot deny Himself"

¹ Layton Talbert, *The Trustworthiness of God's Words: Why the Reliability of Every Word from God Matters* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2022), 128 (All other quotations will be noted merely by a page number [in brackets]).

- God is faithful to his nature
- God is faithful to his words (he made promises to faithless people)

“The point of this chapter is that because all God’s words are trustworthy, we can always rely on God to be exactly what He says He is, even when it doesn’t look to us like He is.” [130]

I. Examples of forgetfulness

A. Jacob: forgetting God’s providence

Gn 42.36 Their father Jacob said to them, “You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; **all these things are against me.**”

Gn 43.14 and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, **if I am bereaved** of my children, **I am bereaved.**”

Gn 48.11 Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.”

B. Naomi: overlooking God’s kindness

Ruth 1.13 would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me.”

Ruth 1.20-21 She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹ “I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

Ruth 2.20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

Ruth 4.14-15 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD **who has not left you** without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. ¹⁵ "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

C. Job: disputing God's fairness

Job 23.3-7 "Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat! 4 "I would present my case before Him And fill my mouth with arguments. 5 "I would learn the words which He would answer, And perceive what He would say to me. 6 "Would He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely He would pay attention to me. 7 "There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

Job 31.35-37 "Oh that I had one to hear me! Behold, here is my signature; Let the Almighty answer me! And the indictment which my adversary has written, ³⁶ Surely I would carry it on my shoulder, I would bind it to myself like a crown. ³⁷ "I would declare to Him the number of my steps; Like a prince I would approach Him.

Job 40.1-4 Then the LORD said to Job, ² "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it." ³ Then Job answered the LORD and said, ⁴ "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth.

Job 42.1-6 Then Job answered the LORD and said, ² "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. ³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." ⁴ 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.' ⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; ⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

D. David: discounting God's promises

1 Sa 27.1 ¶ Then David said to himself, "Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."

1 Sa 13.13-14 Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴ "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

1 Sa 16.12-13 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

1. David got entangled with the Philistines after 1 Sa 27.1, only delivered by providence
2. Just one year and a half later, Saul was dead, and David was on the throne of Israel

E. Habakkuk: wrestling with God's justice, surrounded by unrighteousness

1. Habakkuk had trouble with the headlines of his day

Hab 1.2 How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, "Violence!" Yet You do not save.

Hab 1.3 Why do You make me see iniquity, And cause *me* to look on wickedness? Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises.

Hab 1.4 Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted.

“Habbakuk was bewildered by the apparent disconnect between God’s character and God’s action (or inaction) in the world.” [137]

2. God’s answer, not entirely to Habakkuk’s liking

Hab 1.5-6 “Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because *I am* doing something in your days— You would not believe if you were told. ⁶ “For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.

Hab 1.12-13 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. ¹³ *Your* eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness *with favor*. Why do You look with favor On those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?

3. God promises to deal with the Babylonians, those who get gain by shedding blood (2.6-20), in the meantime he counsels Habbakuk:

Hab 2.2-4 Then the LORD answered me and said, “Record the vision And inscribe *it* on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. ³ “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it carries, **wait for it**; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. ⁴ “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But **the righteous will live by his faith**.

II. Our responsibility: Trust God's Character

Lam 3.37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded *it*?

1 Tim 6.14-15 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ which He will bring about at the proper time— He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

Isa 57.15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *on* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

Lam 3.24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

Ps 50.15 Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me."

Nah 1.7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him.

Heb 13.5-6 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"⁶ so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

Rm 8.37-39 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.