**November 20, 2016 “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 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. Does it ever bother us that 47 million Americans are on food stamps? Our nation is again in turmoil as Mr. Trump is now our President elect. Several mayors are openly saying they will defy any laws on immigration. Others, even from other nations, are holding conferences on how to oppose the things Mr. Trump seeks to enact.

I suppose none of these things are necessarily new but in retrospect maybe these things are happening because we, the citizens of this great country have changed the Lord’s Prayer into “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 our 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 wonder why in the world God ever allowed the Chaldeans 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. He was puzzled and perplexed by what he did not understand.

Habakkuk's attitude in his message and prayer is simply this: God, I don't understand what is going on; I don't understand why You let Israel go and I don't understand why You're bringing the Chaldeans to judge Israel. I don't understand why You are going to wait to judge the Chaldeans after all that they will do. I don't understand any of the things, but I know some important things……. You are God and You are the God who is righteous. You are the God that is Eternal, Omnipotent and All Knowing. 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 will stand and praise You regardless of my circumstances or how I feel.

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 (Vs 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? Is it how will our next President lead this nation?

I will say to you if any or if all of these things are at the forefront of our minds, we are in real trouble. 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?

We ought to be praying daily for God to be glorified in my life; for God to be glorified in this church and for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to be glorified in this nation and throughout the world. That should be the cry and the prayer on the heart of every believer.

Malachi observed something we should never forget when he wrote these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Mal 3: 16-18……. Notice how these verses find similarity with Hebrews 10: 23-25?

1. Habakkuk gets his head-on straight
   1. Chapter 3: 3-15
      1. Remembrance of what God has done
      2. All for His people (vs 12-13)
2. History of God’s People
   1. It's just simple. We just look back and we just start remembering God's continued constant never ending, never hesitating and never ceasing faithfulness.
   2. We can stand face to face with the problem and we can back off of that problem and say now wait a minute
      1. Not only is my God good and right and never does anything wrong.
      2. Not only does He love me and care for me.
      3. Not only is He the kind of a God who is absolutely eternally righteous.
      4. But something else about Him.
         1. He's also absolutely and eternally faithful.
         2. He has promised to keep that which I have committed unto to Him.
         3. That is a New Testament promise for us. And Jesus said, "I will never, what, leave you or forsake you."
      5. Does that mean we will not be afraid?
         1. Vs 16……my inward parts trembled
         2. That fear does not mean fear will not affect us
         3. Our relationship with God is based on His unfailing Word
            1. Nothing came 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. Vs 17-19
   1. I will rejoice in the God of my salvation
      1. Romans 8: 35-39
   2. Do you know Him? Is He your Friend who watches over you?
      1. Rev 22: 16-17