

## **TRUST, BANDANAS AND TIMING**



**Scripture:**

**2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12**

<sup>1</sup>Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>3</sup>We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup>Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring.

<sup>11</sup>To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith, <sup>12</sup>so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4**

<sup>1</sup>The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

<sup>2</sup>O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? <sup>3</sup>Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. <sup>4</sup>So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous — therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

<sup>1</sup>I will stand at my watchpost, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. <sup>2</sup>Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. <sup>3</sup>For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. <sup>4</sup>Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

**This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!**



*About the Guest Preacher:* Cassie Carroll MDiv. has recently graduated from The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology. Before her time in Seattle, she spent five years as the Director of Youth Ministry at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church. Cassie is happy to be back in California and specifically

back in the North Bay. She spent her formative years growing up at Westminster Woods, where her grandparents and parents worked year round. Now she is taking some time to rest from her time in seminary, before diving back into full-time ministry. She has started a project called *The Listening in Place Project* where she is traveling throughout the United States collecting stories from those that are thinking outside the traditional church box. Cassie's hope for the future is to become ordained with the PCUSA. Check out more about Cassie by visiting [cassie-carroll.squarespace.com](http://cassie-carroll.squarespace.com)

## TRUST, BANDANAS AND TIMING

*(At the beginning of the sermon time, Cassie was sitting in the first pew on the pulpit side of the church. When she stood up, she put a bandana around her eyes so she could not see. Cassie then asked Pastor Cindy Alloway to help her. Pastor Cindy verbally guided her to the steps, up the steps and into the pulpit.)*

Cassie said, "Pastor Cindy, I need some help. I have this blindfold on. Can you help me get to the podium?" Pastor Cindy began to talk her through the steps to get to the pulpit. As they were walking to the pulpit, Cassie said to Pastor Cindy, "You know, we've only known each other a short period of time. Can I trust you?" The answer from Pastor Cindy was, "I think so." Cassie said, "Okay." Then Pastor Cindy continued to tell her how to move to get to the pulpit.

### WE MADE IT!

When she arrived at the pulpit, Cassie said excitedly, "Oh my gosh, we made it! You guys! Oh we made it; we're here." She then took off the blindfold, looked out at the congregation and said, "You guys look good."

First, I just want to say thank you so much for having me and I want to say that I'm really honored to be preaching this morning. We are talking about trust today; we're talking about what trust means in relationship with God. So as we enter into this part of our worship, let's pray together.

**God be with us.**

**Help us to hear your words today.**

**The words that are not of you, let them fall to the wayside, and the words that are of you let them stick to our hearts.**

**We love you. And everyone says, Amen.**

## RELATIONSHIPS ARE DIFFICULT

Relationships are difficult. They're frustrating and they can be complicated, whether it's family, friends, or someone you randomly meet on the street. It's complicated. You're never really sure what it requires all the time. I mean yes, it requires showing up, it requires being a little bit respectful of that person. It means that you have to show compassion when you don't really want to and it means that we need to trust. So that means that it can be risky, like being in a relationship can be a little bit vulnerable.

What I think is so fascinating about relationships is that our relationships with God feels even more complicated because we're putting our trust, we're putting our faith in an invisible truth, an invisible presence. It's kind of mysterious. Sometimes it feels unknown; sometimes it feels like it's not even happening. But choosing to trust, we talk about it as blind faith; we talk about it as maybe blindfolded, and it's a little confusing.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

I myself, as Pastor Cindy told you, just graduated from seminary in June. The worst question you can ask someone who is graduating is, "So what's next?" And I go, "Sleeping?" which I have done really well. But what's hard about that step is trusting that God knows what's next. And I chose a path that was a little different than most. I didn't dive directly into a full time pastoral position. I didn't jump into going for a PhD which a lot of my friends have chosen to do. I've chosen to do things a little differently. I realized that I was tired. I realized I had been involved in a lot of work the last four years, and before that as a youth director, I was working five years full time. I realized that I needed to trust, that God was

telling me that I needed to rest. And I've been really thankful for the way that God has provided for me. My Dad and my Step-Mom are here. They gave me a place to live which is a huge deal. I was able to be present and rest in a way that I would not have been able to do without them. I'm really thankful for the relationships that God has given me that I've been able to trust that I wouldn't be alone. My best friend Jennie is here with us this morning and showing me that I'm not alone.

It's amazing. You know, I went church shopping. I did the whole Presbyterian Church rounds and I walked into this community and automatically felt the sweet spirit of hospitality that you guys all have. I'm so thankful that I took the risk of not going straight into ministry or I would have missed out on meeting you guys.

### **TRUST: IMPORTANT AND SCARY**

There is something about this trust that's really important. Yet trust can be really scary. You're not exactly sure what's going to happen next. I was a youth director for five years at Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church down in San Jose, and one of the ways that I liked to torture, I mean teach, the kids was that we would play a community building game. You just saw an example of it as I came up to the podium. You put a blindfold on one student, you have another student across the room and a landmine of couches and pillows and obstacles across the room for them to navigate the "blind" person across the room. All of a sudden, a couch that used to be something comfy to sit on has now become something for your shins to be really upset about. So as these students are now placing their lives - and their shins - in the hands of the person across the room asking them to step right or step left or duck and it's this beautiful tangible example for students to step into this idea of trust.

### **HABAKKUK**

In our world today, we definitely have some land-mines that we weren't necessarily aware of maybe a year ago. We have literal things that feel complicated, that feel

disastrous, that feel violent as Habakkuk's pleas said. Habakkuk literally, in the translation that I have, the section is called Habakkuk's Complaint. I love that! I love that - a complaining moment in scripture. Right? Take a minute; think about it. God not only wants our complaints, like in Holy Scripture, that's a really big deal. There is destruction and violence going on for Habakkuk during this time. The people of God are under persecution and he's seeing that there is strife and conflict abound. It says that the law is paralyzed, in this translation that I have. The law is paralyzed. The way that God has asked the people of God to work in the world is literally stunted because of all the violence and chaos that's around him.

### **VIOLENCE IN OUR WORLD**

Today there is some violence in our world. We have the death of black bodies in the streets; we have the violence of the political climate that we are in. We have the hyping and the protests that are happening in the Dakotas. The list seems to keep growing. It feels a little chaotic to me. I don't know where you stand politically, whether Republican, Democrat, Green Party, Libertarian, whatever, it seems very chaotic and honestly, I'm not sure where we're going to end up. I'm nervous about it, and let me tell you, I have complained about it a lot, and on Facebook.

**But God has an answer.  
And what I also love about Habakkuk  
here is that he calls God out.  
He doesn't just say,  
"I'm upset," and then go and sit down.  
He says, "Not only am I upset,  
but I'm going to stand up here on this  
watch-tower and I am going to wait.  
I'm going to wait for your answer.  
God show up! I'm going to wait."**

Habakkuk realizes that a relationship with God is not one that is passive. Often I feel like there is a myth that our relationship with God, once we say that we are in it then we just do whatever God says, and don't complain, and

we sit with our hands crossed and say, yes, okay, uh huh, right on, let's do it. And yet God wants more than that. God is not just sitting on a throne up in the clouds somewhere giving us commands, saying, 'Do this,' and shooting lightning bolts down. God is saying, "I want a real relationship with you. I want you to complain. And not only do I want you to complain, I want you to listen for my answer. And not only do I want you to listen for my answer, I am going to answer. It may not be exactly when you want me to answer, it may not be the answer you want, but I'm going to answer."

### **GOD'S ANSWER**

I love God's answer in this passage. Write it down. His answer is not just for Habakkuk. Make sure the herald goes and runs to everybody. Let everybody know that I haven't abandoned you. Shout it from the mountaintops, tell everyone, put it on Facebook, Twitter, email, hard copy, snail mail, make a billboard, get it out to the people: I have an answer for you and the answer is wait! Seriously? The answer is wait? But it's an answer. The answer is that my timing is not your timing, but my timing will come and it is good. My timing will come and it is good!

Okay, let me say this again. We need some participation here. My timing will come and it is good, and everyone said, Amen! Amen! Ahh, God's timing is good.

What I love about this passage is that even though the answer may linger, the answer will come and it is good. What I love about this passage is that God wants a real relationship with us. God doesn't want us to be silent onlookers, minions that just do his bidding. God wants a relationship. Now we might not get exactly what we want, but God wants a relationship with us where we can complain, where we can be frustrated and we can trust that good news is coming.

We get to trust that good news is coming and thankfully we don't live in the Old Testament. We live today, the present, knowing that the good news *has* come, that Jesus came, lived, died and rose again for each one of us. Okay, should I say that again? ...That Jesus came, lived, died and rose again for each one of us! (*Congregation says, Amen!*) (You guys are getting it!)

The truth is that God wants relationship with us and he doesn't want a fake one. He doesn't want a passive relationship; he wants a real mutual relationship. So trust, knowing that God's timing is God's timing and that God wants us to be in a relationship with him.

Thanks be to God. Amen



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