

Season 1: Habakkuk

Episode 1: Ready, Steady, Habakkuk

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Sarah: Welcome to Two Sisters and a cup of tea. We're so excited that you're joining us for this, our first season. When we first started this podcast, we started under a different name, word fuelled Hearts. So you'll notice as you travel through this first season that that is the title we introduced with. But don't worry, we're still the same two sisters drinking our cups of tea and enjoying God's word together. We hope you really enjoy it and we look forward to traveling through Habakkuk with you.

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Felicity: Hello and welcome to Word Fuelled Hearts. Hi, Sarah, nice to meet you.

Sarah: Hello.

Felicity: Can you speak cup of tea in hand? Ready for action?

Sarah: Yes, ready for action. Let's admit right now, the podcasting novices that we are, we have just tried to do this and we forgot to press record. So I've got my second biscuit in hand.

Felicity: Very good.

Sarah: What biscuit have you got? And tell me about the biscuit problems over in America. Biscuit problems?

Felicity: Well, yeah, confusions. Confusions, maybe. Confusions. Well, over in America, biscuits are something that you have with gravy. They're a little bit like scones or dumplings. You might have them with a kind of stew kind of thing. I think, to be honest, I haven't really eaten one over here, so I'm not sure. But what we're talking about is a biscuit that's a bit more like a cookie that goes very well with a cup of tea or a cup of coffee or whatever, cup of whatever you've got. And we love a good biscuit. And to be honest, because of that confusion over the biscuit thing, my choice is a little bit limited, but my husband discovered a tin of what he had in childhood, buttery shortbread kind of thing, which it's not a hobnob, but it's pretty good, so it does the job. What have you got in your hand is a hobnob.

Sarah: They're like the one for you.

Felicity: I would say a milk chocolate covered hobnob is probably up there with the.

Sarah: Caramel in between as well.

Felicity: That's a digestive I think you're talking about.

Sarah: Who is it? Maybe I've got one of our Christmas biscuits that we baked last week. So this is a recipe that our mum used with us through our childhood and I think we all still do it.

Felicity: We do. Let us be clear that errors are usually the most beautiful because she has the patience on the artistic skill to really do it and do some work. My brother and I used to kind of rush through to the eating a bit more quickly, whereas I see that actually yours is lacking decoration.

Sarah: There's no decoration. I didn't want to make you feel too bad. And also, my kids decorated in this year. I did decorate one, but they want to give it to me for my meal tonight, so I'm not allowed to eat it right now. I have a plain house shaped biscuit, but it's very tasty and it's reminding me of like family time biscuit. Tell us what we're doing, why we are recording ourselves chatting.

Felicity: I know, not just for the sake of talking about biscuits, but actually you and I both love to get the Bible open with each other and with other people. I think we've been doing that for a number of years in various different formats, because we really believe that God does work through his word, by his spirit. So every time we get the Bible open or talking about the Bible or speaking of his words, then God is powerfully at work and so what better thing than to get the Bible open and to talk about it, and even better with a cup of tea in hand. And so we were thinking about doing that together and then I think we just kind of thought, well, maybe others might benefit from listening in and not just listening into kind of what we're saying, but also just actually thinking, well, maybe I can do this with people, with whoever is around me and the value of that. Does that sound about right?

Sarah: Absolutely, yeah. I guess our prayer, isn't it, that people just open? So we chose to do Habakkuk as our first book in this first series. And I guess one of our big prayers is that people just think, oh, should I go and open Habakkuk with someone else?

Felicity: Let's be clear.

Sarah: Habakkuk in America or Habakkuk in the UK? And actually what opening Habakkuk or Habakkuk means is very up for grabs, isn't it? Because in these Kobe times I cannot walk and read at the same time that's walking is my only way of seeing people. Opening Habitat will look very different for me, but I still want to be doing that with my friends and with people from a family. So creative Bible chat, sitting and chatting with you right now, with it in front of me, but I still want to be doing it in different ways.

Felicity: Why have we chosen Habakkuk?

Sarah: We came up with a list and you said, let's do it.

Felicity: Part of that is Habakkuk is actually really short. I timed myself reading it recently, actually, and it took five minutes. That was quite a quick read. I think if you slowed down and read it kind of a bit more leisurely, it would only be about 10-12 minutes. It's not long, is it? So we really like getting into a whole book, don't we? I think that is a really fantastic thing to really let a whole book speak and so have a good story.

Sarah: It's a really powerful thing, isn't it? I think it's really important thing that you get into the whole context of a book. You can start breathing and living and thinking in the way that the author does. And that really impacts the way you then apply God's word to your situation as well. And I think we were thinking why not have a wrestle? Why not go for something that generally we find quite hard but it's helpful to do together. So Old Testament property, I mean, it's a whole world away, isn't it? I don't know how many.

Felicity: Well, let's just work out where Habakkuk is in the Bible. First of all, because he is hard to find. I still kind of flick around in the pages trying to find him.

Sarah: I'm thankful for the contents page because it would be lost to me otherwise. And he's between Nathan and Zephania page is your friend.

Felicity: He's in amongst the minor prophets. So he is a prophet. We're talking prophecy, which means that they're speaking. Habakkuk is speaking in his time, but he's also speaking of things that are to come. And actually Habakkuk, we don't really know a huge amount about him, unlike in other prophecy books or prophets. Often we get little a biography, but Habakkuk just goes straight in. He says the oracle that Habakkuk, the prophet and then he just goes straight in to speaking that oracle. It's kind of like the weighty word is kind of more important than anything we can know about Habakkuk himself. So we just get straight into talking about what God has said. But by about chapter two we do begin to hear about the Chaldeans or the Babylonians in some translations and that just places him probably just before the Babylonians invaded and actually brought about the great exile that happened in history at that point. So he is probably then under the last king of the southern kingdom. He's in Jerusalem, he's a temple man. He talks about a few things through the book that make us think he's kind of involved in the temple and therefore he's probably sitting under the last king before the Babylonians sweep in and basically destroy the last of that southern kingdom.

Sarah: That sounds like you've done quite a lot of research to get to that point. Tell us how you know that.

Felicity: I definitely don't know that off the top of my head. I have read some Old Testament prophecy before, so I kind of have my bearings a little bit in that sense. But also I found a study Bible really helpful. Just gives you a bit of information, a bit of commentary.

Sarah: Do I need a study Bible?

Felicity: You definitely don't need a study Bible.

Sarah: But sometimes I've just got the NIV.

Felicity: Yeah, and actually we didn't talk about.

Sarah: This because I've got the Esclations.

Felicity: That's probably quite helpful.

Sarah: It means like different translations doesn't mean it's saying different things, it's just different ways of different phrases might come up.

Felicity: Yeah.

Sarah: It'S Old Testament prophecy, which as a genre is really interesting, isn't it? Because it's very lament here, there's poetry, there's pig and motive language that really kind of as you read it and as you read it slowly, you start to see the richness of the imagery. You start to really get into how Habitat is feeling, how people are feeling and how God's feeling. Like, what is God's response to what's going on? And that's the interesting literary, you know.

Felicity: About more this than me literary device rethinking.

Sarah: On a literary device here is that it's phrased in a kind of habitat has a complaint and then God's answers, habitat comes back with an answer and then God answers again. And then you get this extraordinary prayer and song of praise and kind of just heartfelt response from Habitat at the end. So between God and Habitat, which is extraordinary because you're not actually getting addressed to the people at this point, it is this very raw and intimate communication between Habakkuk and his God. And for me, that's extraordinary to see that.

Felicity: Isn't that just one of the most striking things about the book? I think that really is habit. Kicks is so honest in what he's saying to God. He's not saying, oh Lord, it's amazing, it's all wonderful, praise be to you. He's actually saying, Lord, I've got some real problems. What I'm seeing around me is not good. And what are you doing about it?

Sarah: Big, big questions about him. And that's just so comforting, isn't it? I think as we get to the end of 2020 and if we start 21, we've all got massive questions. The kinds of things that he's asking are so poignant for what our experience, our lived experience now is. And I think that's just really helpful as we start this year in that frame. So tell us, what is your highlight verse, if you've got one so far? Or maybe you haven't got one yet, but like, what's your favorite verse so far?

Felicity: Yes. I'm not sure I have a favorite verse yet, but I do have the nub behind the whole book in that I love that what we've just been saying, that he is speaking directly to God. He's honest, he's frank, he's not holding back. I love that he's speaking to God and not to others. I just think that's a real believers response. It's kind of inspiring. But then I also love in two verse, one kind of the other half of that. He says he's asked this question, God's answered. He's going to ask another question. And he says, I will take my stand at my watch post and station myself on the tower and look out to see what he will say to me and what I will answer concerning my. And he's kind of saying, do you know what? I've got these questions, but also I know that you're

going to answer and I'm going to wait for that answer. I love his certainty that God is going to answer. It's not a kind of just wait and see if he answers. There's no ifs, it's just a certainty. He knows his God and he knows that God is going to answer. I mean, it almost sounds a bit kind of brazen, doesn't it? But I think what it is, is actually just a genuine trust and belief that God is a God who has answers to these questions and that he speaks to his people even when the.

Sarah: Circumstances beg to differ. That's the interesting thing, isn't it? I would say just chapter one, verse two, that first phrase, how long a Lord must I call for help? And for me, that the raw honesty in which Habakuk comes to his God and feels that he can express his disappointment, his grief, his lament over what he sees around him. And that just sets the whole tone of the book explaining what I mean, this isn't just kind of propositions, this isn't just a series of statements, this isn't even a story. It's a heart about prayer. We've got this beautiful glimpse into have a Cook's Prayer journal, if you like. He's really asking those big questions and he knows that he can the same pain as you, what you were saying. He's got confidence in God, that no question is too big, no question is too daunting, and he's feeling the pain of what's going on around him. That just sets the tone for the whole book. But I think it sets the tone from my heart as I come to this book as well, because it challenges me within that first verse of like, wow, do I pray like this?

Felicity: I think that is so challenging. Just a call to pray, like, speak to God.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Felicity: Then the posture of the heart as we speak to God.

Sarah: Yeah, it's the posture of my heart in the same vein. And we're going to get onto that next time, aren't we? But just I think it's really striking. It's really encouraging and challenging and it makes me really excited to hear the rest of it.

Felicity: And that is what we're going to get into, isn't it? So join us as we dig in. We're going to consider what Habakkuk's questions are, what God's responses, where it leaves him and us. And if you're going to join us and why not give Habakkuk a read?

Sarah: Yes, that's really helpful, isn't it? To read it beforehand is a really good thing to do. But also, don't worry if you don't, because often I listen to podcasts when I'm on the school run or when I'm on a run, or just when I'm doing some washing up or whatever. This is, to listen to you whenever you want, but you get the most out of it. If you have read a habit of before, you then listen, as with anything in the Bible, isn't it? And you'll get the most out of it. But we always get most out of it when we talk about it with other people, so we encourage you, if you're listening along, why not do that with someone else as well?

Felicity: Shaunie, pray as we wrap up.

Sarah: Yes. I get you closer in prayer.

Felicity: All right. Father God, we praise you so much for your word. Thank you for the book of Habakkuk. Thank you for his heartfelt honesty before you. Thank you that we can open up this

book and hear his heart and hear your answer. And we pray for our time in Habakkuk as we go through. Please would you be at work in our hearts for your glory, and we pray all this in your name. Amen. Did you finish a cup of tea?

Sarah: It's a bit cold, but I'm still enjoying it. And I've got one bite left on my behalf.

Felicity: Yeah, same. I haven't quite got there. It's too much to say. Too much chat.

Sarah: About this.

Felicity: I might go and check out the cupboard and see what we've got in an alternative way.

Sarah: Well, thanks for joining us, everyone, and we look forward to seeing you next time that's bye.