

Peace: In Troubled Times

Week 3 LifeGroup Study Guide

Introduction

This week we deal with one of the most difficult aspects of the series, Habakkuk's plea to God "in wrath may you remember mercy". It's not a fun thing to think about a wrathful God, but it is even less fun to have a wrathful God. There are a couple of distinctions however that we must make to full understand things. First, God's wrath is not retribution, as thou God were up in heaven waiting for you to sin that he might strike you down with a thunderbolt, like Zeus. Instead God's wrath removes all false hope and drives us to the one place that we can find peace, through his Son Jesus Christ. The awful reality of our predicament in relationship to God's Law is summed up by one theologian this way: You have not! You cannot! You must! Here there is only room for Jesus Christ, who comes with his word of promise and gives us peace.

Peace and Troubled Times in Your Life

Youth and family guru Rich Melheim, in talking about the importance of Highs and Lows as a family, says if you don't know your kid's high for the day you don't know your kid, and if you don't know your kid's low for the day, you don't know your kid.

Go around your group and share what might be giving you peace today, and what might be troubling you today.

Pray

God of Mercy, by your word, teach us fear of you that we might run from your hidden glory to where you have been revealed, your Son Jesus Christ. In wrath Lord, remember your mercy. Amen.

Session 3 Readings

Romans 10:14-17 and Habakkuk 3:2-16

In our two readings for today we hear the prophets prayer before God, a prayer that shows the great fear Habakkuk had of God, especially God's glory. It is a prayer filled with vivid imagery of the Glory of God who has created all things. God's glory is so great that it splits rivers and the mountains see God and wither. The prayer speaks of God's wrath and anger over sin which leaves the prophet to close the prayer saying "I hear, and I tremble within: my lips quiver at the sound". Hearing this we can begin to comprehend Paul's words to the Romans, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news". In the midst of wrath we have this other word that comes, carried by the feet of the preacher to speaks it to us and is able to calm all fears, and give peace.

Read Romans 10:14-17. What is it that Paul is saying when he quotes Isaiah 52:7? Why are the feet of preachers beautiful? To what does Paul attribute faith?

Paul lifts up the preached word because salvation is at stake, and when we speak of salvation we are speaking of eternal things. How important than is the preacher?

At its heart Lutheranism is a preaching movement. If we are to believe salvation and eternity is at stake, how does that shape our understanding of evangelism?

The preaching text for this week is from Habakkuk 3:2–16, my study bible labels it as “The Prophet’s Prayer”.

Read the text out loud, what did you hear?

Habakkuk’s prayer shows the nature and power of God. God created all things, and even the creation stands in awe of the power and glory of God. Read verse 2 aloud and listen to what the prophet says. I stand in awe of your work, revive it in our time, and make it known, in wrath remember mercy. How does hearing this prayer make you feel?

God’s wrath has been out of favor for a long time now, instead we read more about the God of Love, scripture itself says God is love. So what are we to make of God’s wrath? Is it still relevant for us today? (Hint, yes it is!)

In Luther’s small catechism we begin by saying “we are to fear and love God”. Lutheran’s preach God’s wrath not in order to launch a search for the source, but so that one learns to run from this angry God in naked majesty—to the preached word of promise. In fear we flee to the only safe place we can, Jesus Christ. How has this been true in your life?

Through the divine wrath God removes all hope in the law. In doing so God places our hope in the rightful place, Jesus Christ and him crucified for you. Share how you have experienced this through the preaching.

Take Away

God’s wrath is extinguished for you by Jesus Christ who makes you a new creation. Remember this week that every day you are drown in the waters of your baptism, and made a new creation, giving you peace with God.

Closing

Close your time in prayer.