

# How God Fills Us Up at Low Points of Life: Session 5

By Jill Briscoe

Jill Briscoe:

Good morning, everybody. Value prayer today. I'm busy losing my voice here. I lost it for three weeks straight. It just disappeared on me and about a month ago and the whole syndrome starting again. So I got 4 hours to do today. I've got 2 hours to do now. And then I go to Wickliffe and do an hour for them. Then I come back and do an hour tonight. Then I've got an hour tomorrow. Have you ever had anyone whisper to you for an hour? You might have before with through.

So let's open our Bibles at Habakkuk. I'll give you about half an hour. I forgot you. Know your Bible here. Do you say Habakkuk, by the way, do you say Habakkuk? Okay. It's very easy for me to find. I have two little grandchildren and one of them likes Habakkuk. Found my Bible the other day I think. So, special Bible. Friend of mine has a real neat idea that. She has five daughters and she has a miracle story. They were in the divorce courts and God put their marriage back together and all their five kids are serving the Lord now. And this has been, you don't have too many of those sort of stories to share, So I love to brag on them. But Karma, who is probably my best friend with these five daughters, is working on five Bibles.

She works with five Bibles because when she dies, she's going to leave one to each of those daughters. And so sometimes I'm sitting in church with her and she's scribbling away notes and everything all over the Bible. And she'll say, this is for Debbie. And then I'll see her again and she's working away and putting her little notes in and says, look what I found in my quiet time

today and she says, this is for Wendy. I think that's the neatest idea because when you get to my age, you start thinking of dying and leaving everything.

Anyway, let's get down to business here. Now, I don't know how much you know about Habakkuk. He's a sort of sad sort of person at the beginning of his story, and he's a very happy one at the end. And he was basically running on empty for a different reason than Elijah was running on empty. He was running on empty because of doubt. He was having a crisis of belief in his life. And we'll find out why. And I'm going to give you a very brief run through the story of Habakkuk because I'm getting to or aiming for the last chapter in the famous poetry passage. As you've probably gathered, I love literature and I love words and I love poetry.

And I think Habakkuk 3:16 through the end is some of the highest form of poetry in the Bible. But before we can get there and discover how God filled him up at the low point of his life, we have to find out why he was low. I think there's nothing quite so devastating as losing faith in God. I mean, if anything's going to empty or out quicker than that, I don't know what it is because if you really begin to get angry at God or you begin to doubt God, there's nowhere really else to go. I mean, where are you going to go? I often say that to women that I cancel. Who are really angry and you understand why they're angry because of what's happening to them or happened to them. And they say, Well, I said, do you pray about this?

I'm too mad at God to pray about this. And so then I always say, Well, where are you going to go, then? Well, I've come to you. So I said, do you think I'm bigger than God? Well, no. So I said, what do you expect me to do for you? Well, I don't suppose I expect you to do anything for

me. So I said, Well, where are you going to go then? And I pushed them back and pushed them back until they realized that if you don't go to God, there's nowhere to go. And so it's very difficult when somebody cuts themselves off from the only help, the only real help that's available to them. And Habakkuk was in danger of doing that. And his book opens with him asking a whole lot of questions. Basically, he asks three questions. Is God there? Does God care? And is God fair?

Now that's doubt that's a crisis of belief. Why was he asking God these questions? I mean, after all, he was the prophet. Maybe he should have known better. Well, he was saying, how long Lord must I call for help and you're not listening? How long must I cry out violence but you don't save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are all around me. There's strife and conflict. The law is paralyzed. Justice doesn't prevail. The wicked hem in the righteous. And justice is perverted. And he's really saying, Why doesn't God do something in my world? His world was quite chaotic, politically. Good King Josiah had been killed. Bad King Jehoiakim had just come to the throne.

I was in Nigeria not too long ago. And somebody said to me. There was a country off to the left or the right. I can't remember where it was that had been very down on missionaries. And the fellow had a coup, actually, while we were there. And the good guy, as far as we were concerned, had got put on the throne and the missionaries were absolutely ecstatic. They said, now we'll get our visas. Now we'll be able to work there. Now we can get the translators in there. And everybody was hopping up and down with joy. But before we left two days later, there was another coup and a bad king was on the throne. So things changed pretty quickly in those sort of

areas of our world. And the missionary that we were staying with, the conversation around that table was a very Habakkuk conversation.

Why? God, you know, whose side are you on? You know what this means. Obviously, you know what this means. How can this happen all around us? Justice is being perverted. How can this be? It's very hard when your intellect is faced with a moral problem in the divine government of the universe to which it can find no solution. Let me say that again. What you do when your intellect is faced with a moral problem in the divine government of the universe to which you can find no solutions. Well, you begin to doubt is God even there? When I was very little girl, hundreds of years ago, I sat on a little three legged stool outside my home in Liverpool, and looked up at the sky, at the crisscrossing of the search lights, looking for the enemy planes that were coming to drop bombs all over my life.

And I remember very well praying a prayer. I'm sure it was the first prayer I ever prayed. I didn't go to Sunday school. I wasn't churched. But somehow I knew that there was a God because I looked up to the sky and saw the stars. And I knew that he lived above the stars and that he'd left the lights on and they were the windows. And so I looked up at the windows in heaven. And I sort of said in my five year old language, if you're there, stop the war. Well, that night a bomb took the back of our house away. And I decided at five that he really wasn't there. Or if he wasn't there, he didn't care. He was helpless or he was busy with some other things that he had to do.

And Habakkuk was asking those sort of questions too. And he wasn't getting any answers. Heard about a little boy that kept asking his father questions like little boys do about six or seven, How

many people in the world, how many fish in the sea, this that and the other and his father was trying to read the newspaper and he kept saying, I don't know, son. I don't know, son. I don't know, son. I don't know, son. So in the end, the little son said, Dad, you don't mind me asking you all these questions, do you? No son, says the father putting his paper down. How are you going to learn if you don't ask questions? Having just said, I don't know, son. I don't know, son. I don't know, son. And in a sense that's what Habakkuk was finding or thinking was happening.

Father this father that. Asking the father questions. And it seemed to be he was getting no answer. And in the end, God leans out of heaven and gives him an answer. Now then, you've got another problem. What you do when you hammer on the door of heaven and want an answer to your question and you don't get one. That's one problem, unanswered prayer. There's another problem when you get an answer you don't want. And that's what happened to Habakkuk. The rest of the chapter one is the answer he didn't want. God says, I'm going to do you something that you haven't even dreamed possible. The Babylonians are coming and they're going to do this and they're going to do that. And he starts revealing to Habakkuk all the things the Babylonians are going to do when they arrive.

Well, now Habakkuk has a devil problem. Is God fair? How can he use the Babylonians to punish Israel? Now, that probably means nothing to you whatsoever, so I'm going to use a modern illustration, a shock illustration to show you what was happening. Just imagine tonight or this morning when you got up in the newspapers, there were headlines, Dr. Billy Graham Receives a Direct Vision from Heaven. God has given him a message for the nation. He's going on national television tonight. 07:00 to tell you what it is. I'd be watching, you'd be watching,

and I would wager an awful lot of other people would be watching too. Dr. Billy Graham would come on and would say, I've never had anything like this happen to me before, but God appeared to me last night.

He, I believe, is great prophet of our century. God has given me a message for you as your prophet. And it is this. Now, then I'm going to have to find another illustration. But I'm going to use this because this guy is dead. But never mind. The Ayatollah Khomeini is going to invade the Western world. Specifically, America will be caught up in this and will be overrun by Muslim people. They will take over the White House. They will take over our government and we are to submit to them. They are God's instrument to chasten the church in America.

Now that's what this means. And Habakkuk says, No, wait a minute, wait a minute. You wouldn't do that. You wouldn't do it. Not a good old Bible believing America. You couldn't do that to us. There's too many Christians here. Too many people living right even though a lot of people aren't really living right. I mean, there's enough of us living right. You wouldn't do it. That's not fair. Is God there? Does he care? Is God fair? What you do when your intellect is faced with a moral problem in the government, the divine government of the universe like that.

A lot of people doubt. Habakkuk did. And who can blame him? Sure we would, too. And so in chapter two, he says, Look, I'm going to get on my prayer time and I'm going to stand there and I'm going to stay there until God explains this to me because it's all too confusing, just too confusing. So God, who has begun to talk to Habakkuk, continues, and he says, Listen, Habakkuk, I'm going to give you a revelation. This is in verse three of chapter two that awaits an

appointed time. It speaks of the end. I'm going to tell you what's going to happen at the end of the world Habakkuk. It's not going to prove false. This is true what you're going to hear. It will linger. It won't be yet. So you're going to have to wait for it. In fact, Habakkuk, you'll be dead and gone before this ever happens.

But it will certainly come and won't delay when the right time is. And what God was saying to him here is, I'm going to tell you what's going to happen at the end of the world because at the end of the world and only at the end of the world, some wrongs will be righted. And this particular thing that you cannot see because you are not me and you do not sit on the throne above the situation and have a worldview like I have a worldview, this is part of the big picture. Eloah is one of God's names, and it means the God of the big picture. He's the God of the big picture. And you and I live in a little tiny part of this picture. And when you're painting a picture, if you know anything about art, there is no picture worth its salt without shadows, without gray.

In fact, when I was doing special art at Cambridge, they never sent us out in sunshine to paint. Never once. Because it's the gray that brings the colors out. And Habakkuk was living not only in a gray place in the Scriptures in the big picture. He was living in a black corner. That little thing that says not to the loom is silent and the shuttle cease to fly. Will God unveil a canvas and show the reason why the black threads are as needful in the weaver's skillful hand as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern he has planned. In the big picture, God would make it come all right. In fact, if you run your eye right down to verse 14, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The earth will be filled with the

glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. But not now. Habakkuk, not in your lifetime, buddy.

In your lifetime, the Ayatollah is coming. In your lifetime, the Babylonians will be here. In your lifetime, Israel will suffer. And if you want to know what they suffer, then read chapter one and you'll figure out what they will suffer. They mentioned fish hooks there, incidentally, which is a thing you'll see in the profits over and over again. It's picturesque language, but it's not altogether picturesque because one of the things the Babylonians loved to do was to put great big fish hooks through the mouths of the people that they caught and chained them all up in a line and take them back behind the chariots. And when you read about the fish and the fish hooks in chapter one, those are very graphic explanations of the torturous ideas that the Babylonians had.

So they're not very nice people. And you can't expect Habakkuk to be dancing up and down, saying, Oh, goody, God is working his purposes out. And you know it's very hard to bounce up and down and say, God is working his purposes out when you happen to be a Habakkuk and you're living in the dark corner of the picture. So God continues to explain things to Habakkuk. Habakkuk says, Well, what am I supposed to do then? And God gives him an answer that we think some of us perhaps belongs in the New Testament, but this is where it comes from. You have to take your eye back up to verse four. Meanwhile, Habakkuk, the just will live by faith.

Now that sounds very New Testament. And of course it is. But it comes from here. And the context of that verse is that when everything else is falling around you, when the ground opens up and swallows everybody else, you will still find your feet on the rock. What will happen when

my whole world is collapsing? I will stand firm. The just, the righteous will somehow live through difficult, troubled times by faith, by trusting. And he that trusts God becomes trustworthy. He that is faithful in those times will be reflecting the faithfulness of God. The faithful God will give his faithfulness his ability for us to go through tough times and trouble times. He'll give us that ability and that power.

It's sort of cold comfort to Habakkuk that the wicked are going to be punished in the end and that the just will be rewarded. And there again, I sympathize with him, don't you? Because when somebody is in deep trouble and you say, Well, hang on there and it will all be all right in the end, you'll probably be dead and gone when all this is settled. I mean, it seems to be cold comfort, and yet we have to be realistic. And there are four words when trouble comes to you, when the Chaldeans are on the way, when there is something you cannot do anything about, and there will be those times in our lives. God does not promise us to be healthy, wealthy, and wise. He doesn't promise that. He promises a cross. In fact, he says, if they did this to me, what do you think they're going to do to you?

So what happens when we face our Calvary? What happens at that time? Well, what happens is, first of all, the word release. You trust him to help you to endure what he leads you to embrace. You trust him to help you to endure what he leads you to embrace. The word embrace is very important because that's what Habakkuk means. The name Habakkuk means to embrace. And God was calling this man to embrace what he was leading him to endure. I just said goodbye to a few of my friends who have gone to heaven. We have twelve elders and six of their wives having curable cancer. Two have died. Four will be, humanly speaking, going to heaven before long.

One of them was given 13 years more than she was told she would have. But she just woke up a few times. I think of death as waking up to reality. This is the dream. That's the reality. And she woke up not too long ago.

One of those women lived in Habakkuk in the last year of her life. It's a wonderful place for people that are suffering. And if you do any crisis canceling, if you do any ministering to people, if people are really in trouble or you find yourself in trouble, then know the places in the Bible where people have struggled like you will struggle with these things. And what you have to do is release this thing. You trust him. Henry Artemius said at the end of her life, I wish I had trusted him more. Now if a woman like that wishes she'd learn to trust more, then I wonder what we're going to say at the end of our lives. But you have to release it. You have to say, okay, the Chaldeans are coming. This is part of the big picture. It is not going to change. Yes, you change everything. You can change. Of course you do.

But there are some things you cannot change. And that's realism. It's not fatalism. That's realism. You embrace the situation, believing that God is in control, that's realism. You embrace the situation, believing that God is still on the throne. Remember the talk yesterday. In other words, you get a good look at those old Chaldeans. You accept the situation you cannot change. Thirdly, revelation. Release realism revelation. Learn to see God as he's revealed before the Chaldeans are running all over your living room or all over your bedroom. Learn to see God as he is in the good times. I talked about this a couple of times.

Some of you totally spiritually goof off in the good times. Don't expect to learn anything in the bad times because you'll be hanging on by your fingernails when those Chaldeans get there.

You've got a fish hook through your mouth. You'll not be learning how to pray. So it's the good times that God gives us. Celebration times that we got to work, work, work. And we're ready to be a Habakkuk when the time comes. The realism. Revelation. Learn to see God as he is and God does for Habakkuk what he will do for all of us. He gives him a revelation of himself in chapter three and he sees God coming on this cloud and again, it's poetry language. A shadow of the reality, but beautiful stuff. Read it when you get home. Perhaps in your quiet time tonight.

And he sees this vision of God. It's like God leaning out of heaven and talking to Job, so that Job says, Okay, okay I've got it. You are now bigger than my problem. You see, there's two ways to look at problems. You can look at the Chaldeans and they're in front of you, and you can't see anything but Chaldeans. And behind the Chaldeans is your God and your God is too small because all you can see is Chaldeans. Or you can reverse the order and look at the Chaldeans through your God. And they sort of get into perspective. It doesn't mean that they're not horrible and it doesn't mean that they're not fierce. Doesn't mean that they're not terrible. But what it does mean is you've got the thing in perspective. You're looking through your God at your problems.

And that's what happened to Habakkuk in chapter three. He saw his problems diminished in size and his God expanded in size. And he said, yeah, he's big enough to keep me in this thing. To keep me through this thing. My God is not too small. JB Philips wrote a book called Your God Is Too Small. I don't know if it's even still in print, but it's one of the best of the books I ever read as a young Christian, and it gave me an expanded ability to be able to see God and to look at my

problems through him. So you release. You are realistic. You work hard on this revelation that God wants to give you through the Scriptures of Himself. Through the scriptures. And then you just hang on.

I remember Elizabeth Elliot using Philips' paraphrase, and I can't remember it altogether of James 2. Is it? Where it says when trouble comes and his translation is fabulous. It's something about when trouble comes knocking at your door, open the door and welcome him as a friend. And don't reject him as an enemy. And that's his free translation of that when trials and troubles come to you my brothers don't resist them, but welcome them. I mean who can do this? Who's a masochist here? Who's a martyr by nature? I'm not. I'm very fond of myself. I get a cold, I get worried. I ask all of you to pray for me when I lose my voice. You know, poor little baby. And this is how we feel about ourselves. We don't like pain. I don't like it. Do you like it? I think there's something wrong with people looking for trouble.

But then you never get the grace until the Chaldeans are knocking at the door. I love Corie Ten Boom's little illustration where she was talking about always fearing she'd never stand up under torture. When she was a little girl, she used to say to her Daddy, What will I do if I'm ever tortured for Christ? I'll never be able to stand it. And her Daddy used to say, Corie, when you get on the school bus, when do I give you the penny for the bus? And she said, oh, Daddy, just before I get on the bus. And he said, Right. The day she stood at Ravensbruck, stripped and naked, waiting to enter the gates into hell, she said, God gave me the penny. God gave me the Penny.

When is God going to give you the penny? You get on the bus. So of course we feel like this now. How could I do it? What would it be like if I wasn't living in America and I was living in China at the moment? Or I was in South Africa and wouldn't do certain things and got put in jail like a young friend of mine who is college age? I told Cassidy's nephew he wouldn't join the army because he'd been working with the Soweto youth. And it would have meant doing things that he felt he couldn't do. So he went to jail for six years and he's in a cell. My husband's going to try and visit him this week. He's 19 years of age. Two college careers later, he'll come out and he wrote a letter to his uncle saying, These walls these walls are not thick enough to keep my love in or your prayers out. 19 years of age.

And for Michael Cassidy, he's having to embrace what he's being called to endure, and he's doing it. And when did God give him the penny? The day he walked into that jail cell, according to him. God will give you the penny. And so Habakkuk waits for the day. And he sees this vision of God in verse 16 of chapter three, he says, I heard and my heart pounded. My lips quivered at the sand and decay crept into my bones, and my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us. Has he seen the Chaldeans? Is that why his legs are trembling? No. He's seen the Lord. And you know when you get more frightened of God than you do of the Chaldeans, then you're going to be able to endure what God asked you to embrace.

He is not trembling because he's seen the trouble. He's trembling because he's seen God. That's what we need. You got to get to work here. We got to get bigger, haven't we? And then he comes to this poetry. Listen to this. This is just fantastic. Though the fig tree doesn't bud, though there

are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails, though the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will be joyful in God, my Savior, because the sovereign Lord is my strength. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He enables me to go on the heights. He comes out with this poem of praise and joy. Joy! Joy to start with such doubt and finish with such joy. The steps have been taken, and I want to just take those little pictures. Then we'll have some open time for questions and just apply them.

I always work in pictures. I think every time the Bible opens for me, pictures fall out of it. And I guess that's because God's a heavenly Father and I'm a little child. And he knows that children like picture books. And I often feel as though I'm sitting on God's knee and he's opening his word and the pictures fall out to me. And there are so many lovely pictures here. Though the fig tree doesn't bud. What does that mean? Well, for Israel, the fig tree was very important. If the fig tree budded, it took a long, long time to burden bear fruit. It meant there'd been peace and prosperity and jobs for everyone. And if the fig tree didn't bud, it meant an enemy had come and the first thing they did was cut down the fig trees to burn the city down. They burnt the city, they made it rubble. Then they built the next city on the top, like the landfill we're hearing about.

And so the fig tree was a good firewood. And if it had had time to grow and bud and fruit, it meant that God had blessed those people with peace and prosperity and jobs. Basically speaking, what God is saying here and what Habakkuk is saying, God is saying through Habakkuk is this, If you don't get a job, will you rejoice? Not in the fact you haven't got a job, but in the Lord. If you don't have prosperity, will you rejoice? I am appalled at the motivation of a lot of Christian

students of why they're doing what they're doing, how much money they can make. And I am appalled a lot of Christian parents who send their kids to Christian college, not with the idea of service, but with the idea of a return for their dollar and sending them here.

And I really know what I'm talking about. I'm on a board of a couple of colleges. If I don't get prosperous, you mean if I don't really make it in business, if I don't have my big house and this and that and the other, I'm going to find any joy. I'm going to find any joy in that? Well, it's funny how things get you instead of you getting things. Watch it. I lived in a castle. I was brought up in a castle and God took all that away from me and sent me to full time work, where I lived in a little tiny cottage where it was so small the doors wouldn't even shut on the beds. But I'd rather live in my cottage with Christ than in my castle without Him. And that's where it's at.

Though the fig tree doesn't bud yet will I produce. Though there are no grapes on the vines, grapes are a picture in the scripture of many things. I could apply this picture in many ways. They're a picture of children. And I want to say something here. Now there's a verse that says, Thy wife shall be like a fruitful vine by the side of thy house and thy children like olive plants around thy table. I love the picture. Little plants all sitting there waiting for their conflicts. This does not mean the wife is climbing the walls. My wife shall be like a fruitful vine by the side of thy house. It's just a picture. But though there'd be no grapes on the vine. In our society, and perhaps in your experience, could mean for you that there are no children for you. One in six women in the States are now infertile. The man's ability to give children has diminished by 80%. Nobody knows why.

Is it what we're drinking? Is it the environment? They're all scrambling. And there's one thing I do in increasing numbers. I talk to woman after woman after woman who cannot bear children. My own daughter in law was in that situation. For seven years, they tried to have kids and were told they would never have them. And I watched Debbie struggle through to Habakkuk chapter three. And one day she said to me, not in these words, but in her own, though there are no grapes on this vine yet will I rejoice? And she did. Though there are no grapes on the vine, God graciously sent her medical help and she was able to have children.

But it was all right whether she did or whether she didn't at that point. Though, there are no grapes on the vine, though the olive crop fails, and I'm not going to pause here because I'm not talking to parents, but one of the greatest fears that some of your parents have, hopefully, most of them is that you might fail for the Lord. What happens if the olive crop fails? What happens if the little olive plants grow up and go to Christian college and then go out? And as I was talking to a mother Brazilian missionary. Last month, she said my kid did so well, went to Wheaton, did so well, married a Christian guy did so well. And then the whole thing. I don't know what happened. The world fell apart, left her husband, took away a married man from three small children. He's left her. She's living with somebody that she doesn't even know.

What happened? The olive crop failed. Now that particular mother was taking all that back on herself. What did I do? What did I do? Stayed up all night with that lady, actually. Until she came to the point of realizing she was carrying a lot of false guilt. Yeah, we never do it all right. But in this instance, I didn't see much she'd done wrong and you can carry along. A lot of false guilt has to be put at the foot of the cross. You have to put your mother's sins at the foot of the

cross and say, okay, God, I didn't do it all right. I'm sorry, but I don't need to carry something I don't need to carry it either.

God had a son. He put him in paradise and he still went wrong. We've got free will. And when you're an adult, there's nothing much a parent can do about it. But when the olive crop fails, I came to a point when we were raising our teenagers, when I became obsessed as a parent with the fear that my children wouldn't make it spiritually. I became so obsessed with this fear, and I had no valid reason for it. They were just being ordinary, rambunctious teenagers. But I had this fear they weren't going to make it for God. And I became useless. Stuart said to me one day we need to go out with this couple. We need to talk to them. We went out. I sat there staring into space and at the end of it, when they gone, Stuart said to me, Where were you? Jill? And I said, what do you mean? Where was I? He said, Well, you weren't here. Where were you? I said, Well, I was wondering if Judy got in on our curfew because, you know, she broke it last time.

And he said, Well, I knew you weren't with it. You've got to get hold of this. You're obsessed. You're obsessed. And I had to nail down and say, okay, God, I'll do everything I know how to do and then I want to tell you, if this olive crop fails yet will I rejoice? I'm going to go on with you. I'm not going to let this obsess me. My kids don't make it. I will. And though the fields produce no food and there are no sheep in the pan and cattle, and I could apply them all. Let me just tell you about this sheep. By the way, the word here is the sacrificial lamb. Thank you so much. The sacrificial lamb.

And this again, as you dig around in the peak around the corner of the verse and find out what it all means. The poor woman of that day and age, I hear a lot of women say to me, We're hard done to. Stuff and nonsense. We are treated like queens and princesses in this culture. The poor woman of Bible days, when this was written, was working all day in the fields alongside her husband. Then they would come home. He would sit in the tent and shoot the breeze with the rest of the men, and she would get to work. And she would do everything else without any modern apparatus. Look after the kids, serve the men, serve the food, bat the kids over the head, put them to bed with one hand. Why? Because her left arm was busy carrying around the sacrificial lamb. This two the woman had to do.

Have you ever picked up a sheep one year old? I mean, we're not talking about little bunny rabbit size here. We're talking about a dirty great sheep that weighs. I cannot tell you what. Under her arm, not only was it under her arm, she would wrap her hand. You can see pictures of this in encyclopedias. Wrap her hand round its little mouth, and she'd be chomping its jaws and in between batting the children, serving the men, doing the housework, so she could get up early the next day to go back out of the fields, she'd be stuffing its mouth with mold reliefs to fatten it up. Now, this only happened for about four months of the year, so I suppose it wasn't too bad.

But that was what a woman was doing. She didn't have time to go to Biola and learn all the neat stuff you have and do all this nice stuff where you're served and you don't have to serve other people. So just be glad you're a woman in this day and age. But then when there were no sacrificial sheep in the pen, could you then rejoice? And I want to apply this like this, that when you get into ministry, we're talking about being equipped for service, let me tell you something.

You will feel like that woman, and I'm using her for men and women here. You men that get into Christian service. You women that get into Christian service. Sometimes you will feel you have carried around a little sheep or a big sheep for four months, for four years, and you've stuffed its mouth with good things. You've chomped it to jaws to make it eat.

And then when you look for sacrifice, there are no sheep in the pen. When you look for a return, when you've disciplined and disciplined and disciplined that kid, when you've given your heart and life and had them in your home and your whole family life's been disrupted and you look for the sacrificial lamb, it won't be there. Can you then, rejoice? When we worked with teenagers, I discovered you had to have an infinite capacity for being let down. And I didn't have it because I'm not infinite. But of course, that's why I've got Jesus. He is. In other words, God says you can't. I never said you could. I will. I always said I would.

And you have to come to realize that. And whether your ministry is successful, whether all those little sheep you're stuffing ever go out and become sacrificial lambs is sort of irrelevant, when you've got your focus right, you might be called to minister somewhere and never see anybody come to Christ. Could you do that? Or are you so caught up in the Christian cultural success syndrome, number syndrome and everything else syndrome that you wouldn't do very well. If your joy is in the Lord and not your circumstances, you'll be all right. And you'll be able to say, God is my savior. God is my sovereign. God is my strength. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He enables me to go on the heights because the high places are the low places you see.

God will give you hinds feet. You won't slip. You'll stand firm. You'll be able to walk through life with a surefootedness, a faithful surefootedness, even in the face of the Chaldeans. I love this verse specifically. I was telling the people that were in my somebody asked a question here yesterday about, no, sorry. It was in the dorm last night. How do you look at a passage of Scripture and how do you apply it? And I use colored pencils. I use blue for commands, green for warnings, yellows for promises. And my red pencil underlines what I feel is for me what God is saying to me, what I must apply today or tomorrow or this week or for this term or for this problem. So that when I open my Bible, there's all sorts of little red verses, and they remind me, oh, yes. God said that to me last year. It's neat. You can see it in a minute because we forget so soon.

And about, I suppose it's five years ago now I began to have a lot of back trouble. And I went to specialists and they said, Well, we can't do anything because all the troubles in the same place, we can't anchor it. There are four discs gone and one going, and they're all together. So there's nothing we can do. And in fact, one specialist said, I don't know, Mrs. Briscoe, what your denominational background is, but I'm afraid I have to tell you that the rest of your life, you will have to live in a little bit of purgatory. So I said, Well, I don't believe in purgatory, but that's all right. I get your drift. Well, that wasn't very encouraging. Then I went to another specialist and he said, Well, Mrs. Briscoe, the thing here is that you shouldn't stand for more than ten minutes. You should never sit at a desk and write for long periods of time. You should certainly never travel and never lift anything like suitcases.

So I thought, okay, and again, it was reading through Habakkuk. You see, you have to know where to go in the scriptures. I ran to Habakkuk. I said, God, I don't know if I can embrace what you're asking me to endure. I don't like pain. You know that. You know me well enough. What you ask me to do? And he said to me five years ago, I'll make your feet like hinds feet. You'll not slip. You'll go on the high places. But the high places will be low places for you, Jill. The low places will be high places. And I haven't missed a step, not without pain. But I haven't missed a step because God is my strength.

That does not mean he will take the pain away. I wish it did, but it doesn't. And I want to tell you that there have been joyful steps. Joyful steps. And whenever I stand up for the third or fourth hour and my legs are hurting very badly and my back is killing me, I think of this and I say, hinds feet. Lord, give me hind's feet. One more hour. Lord, give me hind's feet. And he does. He gives me the strength. It is a very present strength in my time of very little trouble. My troubles are very small. But that happens to be one of my troubles. And he gives me strength. And if he gives me strength in my little troubles, I believe he will give me strength in my big troubles when they come.

God is my savior. Oh, yes, God is my sovereign. He knows what's happening. He's up there. He's on the throne. He sees the big picture. He is my strength. Yes, you are, God. Thank you for it. You do it for me. And you have made my feet like the feet of a deer. You have enabled me to go on the heights. So. Are you willing to be a Habakkuk? Are you willing to embrace what perhaps God is asking you to endure? And you say, Jill, this is scary. I don't think he's asking me to endure anything. Is he yet? Hopefully, no. You cannot live all your way through this life without

coming to a Habakkuk situation. And when you do remember, this book, nowhere to go. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, I have no idea who you are speaking to through this message. I just know that in a crowd like this, you will be calling some of your children to endure what you will be asking them to embrace. And I pray that these words of hopeful encouragement may remain with them. And the [audio abruptly stops] joy that Habakkuk was telling us about. Not happiness that depends on happenings. But joy that is there when our happenings don't happen the way we happen to want them to happen. Oh, God, we are very weak and we sort of get very worried and we're fearful and we're very fond of ourselves.

Forgive us for that. Toughen us tenderly and give us hinds feet. We ask it that our lives of joy may be a testimony to a hurting world. In Christ's name. Amen. I think we have to get over and I can take three or four questions and then we have to zip if there are any. Well, I tell you what. If you've got any questions, the person next to you will answer them. How's that? Now, you can just come down and ask me them personally, but I think you need to be dismissed. Thank you very much.