

How Long Is Long Enough?

*"How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, 'Violence!' but you do not save?"*

Habakkuk 1:2 (NIV)

Recently I visited a fine Christian couple and the husband had suffered physically for a number of years. He was unable to work, his pension did not cover the bills and they had moved into very modest accommodation to try and ease the economic pain.

However, what was most difficult for them was not the humble circumstances they found themselves in but it was the incessant physical suffering the man had to endure. His wife was very tired of being on call for him 24/7. He was weary of waking each morning only to realize that the nightmare of their lives was still with them to mock and to beat them down.

The sad man asked me, "Gordon, how long is long enough? Will there be an end to all of this for my wife and myself?" I paused and took a deep breath before trying to answer them.

My response was to tell them I did not have an answer to their question. Having been in the ministry

for many years I quoted to them the verse, Isaiah 55:8 (NIV) "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord."

I explained to them my dilemma at not having an answer to the question. Then I turned them to Scripture for help. In 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NIV) we read, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

I told them that in this life the Lord does not always give us answers to the tough questions we might ask. There are days when we come to the end of our reasoning about the mysterious ways of the Lord and all we can do is what Job did in the midst of his horrendous sorrows. "I am unworthy--how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer---twice, but I will say no more."

Job 40:4-5 (NIV)

All that is to be done when

life does not offer answers to these questions is to lay ourselves in the almighty arms of a sovereign, wise, and loving God, and wait for His time to explain to us why life must be as it is. This is called faith, trusting the Lord when you do not understand Him, when you have no idea of why you must suffer more than others.

Will you today trust yourself to the One Who loved you and gave Himself for you (Galatians 2:20)? Will you submit to the One Who has loved you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3)? Come today and receive the tender embrace of His eternal love and wait patiently for Him to make His ways known to you.

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