



# SUNDAY SCHOOL OCTOBER 5, 2025

Prayer:

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Old Testament .....2**

**Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:2-4 (hu-BACK-uk)..... 2**

        Overview ..... 2

        Biblical Context..... 3

        Historical / Non-Biblical / Political Context ..... 3

        Historical Timeline / Biblical Timeframe..... 3

        Scholarly Metaphorical Interpretation With Modern-Day & Grant County Context ..... 3

        Summary ..... 4

**New Testament.....4**

**2 Timothy 1: 5-14 ..... 4**

        Overview ..... 4

        Biblical Context..... 4

        Historical / Non-Biblical / Political Context ..... 5

        Historical Timeline / Biblical Timeframe..... 5

        Scholarly Metaphorical Interpretation With Modern-Day & Grant County Context ..... 6

        Summary ..... 6

**Addendums.....7**

**Shared Themes of Today’s Scripture ..... 7**

**Intercessory Prayer ..... 8**



## Old Testament

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:2-4 (hu-BACK-uk)

*The prophet Habakkuk laments injustice, and God calls for faith*

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,  
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you “Violence!”  
and you will not save?

Why do you make me see wrongdoing  
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;  
strife and contention arise.

So the law becomes slack,  
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous;  
therefore, judgment comes forth perverted.

Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision;  
make it plain on tablets,  
so that a runner may read it.

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.

Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faithfulness.

### OVERVIEW

Habakkuk is a short prophetic book (three chapters) that records a dialogue between the prophet and God during a time of social injustice and looming foreign invasion.

- **Habakkuk 1:1–4:** The prophet laments rampant injustice, violence, and corruption among his people. He questions why God seems silent and inactive.
- **Habakkuk 2:2–4:** God responds, instructing Habakkuk to write down the vision clearly, assuring him that divine justice will come in due time. The climax is verse 4: *“the righteous will live by faith.”*

This section captures both human anguish at injustice and God’s call to faithful endurance.



## BIBLICAL CONTEXT

- **Prophetic Genre:** Unlike most prophets who primarily deliver God's words to the people, Habakkuk dialogues directly with God. His complaint-prayer style makes the book unique.
- **Theological Theme:** The central tension is between God's holiness and apparent tolerance of injustice. Habakkuk raises the question: *Why does God allow evil to prosper?*
- **Faith Response:** The key phrase, "*the righteous will live by faith*" (2:4), became foundational for Jewish and Christian thought, later quoted by Paul in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:38.

## HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **Setting:** Late 7th century BC, likely during the reign of King Jehoiakim of Judah (609–598 BC).
- **Internal Corruption:** Judah was rife with violence, injustice, and exploitation by the elite. Courts were corrupt, and the poor suffered.
- **Global Powers:** Assyria had recently fallen; Babylon was rising. Habakkuk's prophecy anticipates Babylon's role as God's instrument of judgment, even though Babylon itself was brutal and unjust.
- **Political Tension:** For ordinary Judeans, it seemed God allowed both domestic corruption and foreign oppression unchecked. Habakkuk gives voice to this frustration.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **622 BC:** Josiah's reforms briefly restore faithfulness, but his death leads to decline.
- **609 BC:** Jehoiakim becomes king; injustice and oppression increase.
- **605 BC:** Battle of Carchemish – Babylon defeats Egypt, establishing dominance.
- **c. 605–600 BC:** Likely timeframe of Habakkuk's prophecy. Babylon is rising, Judah is corrupt, and the people wonder why God is silent.
- **586 BC:** Jerusalem destroyed by Babylon—fulfillment of what Habakkuk anticipates.

## SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Scholars see Habakkuk's complaints as **timeless human wrestling with injustice:**

- **Metaphorical Layer:** Habakkuk 1:1–4 symbolizes the cry of communities weighed down by corruption, violence, and systems that fail to deliver justice. The "vision" of 2:2–4 represents a divine perspective that justice is certain, though delayed, and that the faithful must persist with trust.
- **Modern-Day Context:** In America (and locally in Grant County), people often feel frustrated by slow justice—whether in housing shortages, economic inequality, political polarization, or crime that seems unchecked. Like Habakkuk, citizens cry out, "*How long, Lord?*"
- **Grant County Context:** Local challenges—such as struggling families facing poverty cycles, the decline of local industries, the opioid crisis, and gaps in healthcare—mirror the prophet's lament about a system that seems to let the vulnerable fall through the cracks. Yet the call remains: *faithful endurance, not giving in to despair.*
- **Practical Application:** Just as Habakkuk was told to "write the vision plain," modern believers and communities are called to articulate clear goals and hopes—whether through church outreach, civic engagement, or grassroots efforts. Living by faith means not giving up even when change seems slow.



## SUMMARY

Habakkuk 1:1–4; 2:2–4 presents a timeless tension between human cries for justice and God’s timing. Habakkuk voices frustration at unchecked violence and corrupt systems, questioning God’s silence. God responds that justice will come, but it requires patience and faith: the righteous must live by faithfulness. Historically, this referred to Judah’s corruption and Babylon’s rise.

Metaphorically, it speaks to every age where injustice persists. For modern readers, including those in Grant County, Indiana, it challenges us to face social problems with honesty, to name injustices clearly, and to hold fast to faith that God’s justice and renewal will prevail, even if delayed.

## New Testament

### 2 Timothy 1: 5-14

#### *Paul writing to his protégée Timothy about Thanksgiving & Encouragement*

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands, for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace, and this grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day the deposit I have entrusted to him.

Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

*(The second paragraph is 94 words!)*

## OVERVIEW

This passage is part of Paul’s second letter to Timothy, often considered his final letter before martyrdom. Paul writes from prison in Rome, encouraging his younger protégé Timothy to remain steadfast in faith, courage, and teaching. In verses 5–14, Paul recalls Timothy’s sincere faith, nurtured by his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice, and exhorts him to “fan into flame” the gift of God. Paul warns against timidity, calls Timothy to embrace God’s Spirit of power, love, and self-discipline, and reminds him to guard the good deposit of the gospel through the Holy Spirit. It’s both personal (passing the torch) and universal (encouraging all believers to endure suffering for the gospel).

## BIBLICAL CONTEXT

- **Faith heritage:** Paul honors the role of Lois and Eunice, showing how faith often passes through family and community.



- **Spiritual gifts:** Paul refers to a gift imparted “through the laying on of hands” (v. 6), likely ordination or empowerment for ministry.
- **Spirit vs. fear:** Timothy is urged to act from power and love, not timidity—a reminder that fear doesn’t come from God.
- **Suffering and endurance:** Paul links gospel witness with suffering, modeling courage by his own chains.
- **Guarding the deposit:** The gospel is portrayed as a sacred trust, something Timothy (and by extension, the Church) must preserve and protect.

#### HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

- **Authorship and imprisonment:** Traditionally attributed to Paul during his final Roman imprisonment (ca. 64–67 AD), though some scholars debate Pauline authorship. The tone reflects a farewell testament.
- **Roman persecution:** Christianity faced suspicion and sporadic persecution under Nero after the Great Fire of Rome (64 AD). Paul’s mention of shame and suffering reflects real dangers for leaders like Timothy.
  - **The Great Fire of Rome** erupted in July AD 64 and raged for six days, devastating much of the city and leaving thousands homeless. Ancient sources differ on its cause: Tacitus (a first-century Roman senator, historian, and governor, who best known for his works *Annals* and *Histories*, which provide detailed accounts of the Roman Empire’s politics, emperors, and society) reports that it began in the shops near the Circus Maximus, while rumors spread that Emperor Nero himself had ordered it to clear land for grand building projects—though he later blamed Christians, marking one of the first official persecutions of the faith. The fire destroyed three of Rome’s fourteen districts and damaged seven more, reshaping the city’s architecture and prompting Nero to enact new building codes with wider streets and more fireproof materials. Politically, it weakened public trust in Nero, but for early Christians, it marked the beginning of a dangerous era where they were scapegoated and subjected to brutal punishments.
    - **Circus Maximus** – Built centuries before the Colosseum, was primarily for chariot races and could hold more people (some estimates as high as 250,000). It was a long, open-air oval track.
    - **Colosseum** – Completed around AD 80 under Emperor Titus, it was an amphitheater used for gladiator games, animal hunts, and spectacles, with seating for about 50,000–70,000.
- **Jewish-Christian family heritage:** Eunice (Timothy’s mother) was a Jewish believer who accepted Christ (Acts 16:1). Lois, Timothy’s grandmother, signifies how early Christianity spread through family units, not just public preaching.
- **Patronage and trust:** In Greco-Roman culture, a *deposit* was a legal or financial trust given to another to guard faithfully. Paul borrows this language to describe the gospel as a treasure entrusted to Timothy.

#### HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Early Life of Timothy:** Born to a Jewish mother and Greek father (Acts 16:1), Timothy likely converted through Paul’s ministry around AD 47–49.



- **Paul's Second Imprisonment in Rome:** Around AD 64–67, during Nero's reign. This letter reads as Paul's final words, with urgency and intimacy.
- **Transmission of Faith:** This text highlights the early second-generation church, where leadership transitioned from the apostles (Paul) to younger leaders (Timothy).
- **Broader Christian Development:** This period saw the beginnings of structured leadership (bishops, elders) and creedal affirmations of Christ's resurrection as a counter-narrative to Roman power.

#### SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

- **Heritage of faith as legacy:** Just as Timothy's faith was nurtured by his grandmother and mother, many in Grant County today inherit spiritual traditions from grandparents and parents. Churches here often reflect multi-generational attendance—grandparents sitting beside grandchildren in pews. Yet, Paul's reminder also challenges younger believers to make that faith their own, not simply inherited.
- **Spirit vs. timidity in a rural community:** Many in small-town Indiana struggle with speaking openly about faith in workplaces, schools, or civic meetings where skepticism or division can silence voices. Paul's words remind us that Christian witness requires courage rooted in love and discipline, not fear or self-protection.
- **Guarding the deposit in a shifting culture:** Just as Timothy had to guard the gospel amid Roman persecution and false teachings, local churches today must safeguard the core of their faith amid cultural pressures—whether political polarization, consumerism, or declining local news shaping narratives. The "good deposit" could be likened to preserving authentic, lived-out Christian community in the face of external distractions.
- **Embracing suffering and service:** For Paul, suffering validated the message. In Grant County, suffering may not be imprisonment but could be ridicule, loss of social standing, or the harder work of serving neighbors without recognition. Like Timothy, believers here are reminded that authentic discipleship often comes at personal cost.
- **Metaphor of fire:** Paul tells Timothy to "fan into flame" his gift. In rural Indiana, where many heat with wood or gather around fire pits, this image resonates. Fire dies without tending. Likewise, faith requires intentional renewal—study, prayer, worship, and action—otherwise it flickers out.

#### SUMMARY

2 Timothy 1:5–14 blends encouragement, inheritance, and responsibility. Paul recalls Timothy's family-shaped faith and urges him to kindle it into active ministry. The Spirit God gives is not one of fear, but of power, love, and self-control. Timothy is exhorted to embrace suffering for the gospel, following Paul's own example, and to guard the sacred trust of the gospel with the help of the Holy Spirit. For today, including in Grant County, this passage calls believers to honor their spiritual heritage, boldly live their faith, endure hardship without shame, and faithfully preserve and pass on the good news in a world of competing voices.



## Addendums

### Shared Themes of Today's Scripture

- **Faith that endures**
  - *Habakkuk*: The righteous live by faith, even when justice seems delayed.
  - *2 Timothy*: Timothy is urged to hold firmly to the faith handed down from his grandmother and mother, and to guard it with courage.
- **Responding to adversity**
  - *Habakkuk*: Confronts corruption, violence, and God's apparent silence.
  - *2 Timothy*: Faces opposition, suffering, and the temptation to be ashamed of the gospel.
- **God's timing and trust**
  - *Habakkuk*: God promises justice will come in His appointed time.
  - *2 Timothy*: Paul reminds Timothy that God's grace was given before time began and now revealed in Christ.
- **Voice of Complaint vs. Voice of Encouragement**
  - *Habakkuk* gives voice to doubt and frustration: "Why do you allow this?"
  - Paul gives voice to reassurance: "Fan into flame your gift... God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power."
  - *Together, they show the full spectrum of faith: honest questioning and courageous endurance.*
- **Faith in the Face of Delay vs. Faith in the Face of Danger**
  - *Habakkuk* calls for patience until God acts.
  - Paul calls for boldness even when faith brings suffering.
  - *Both require trust beyond circumstances.*
- **Writing it Down vs. Guarding the Deposit**
  - God told *Habakkuk* to "write the vision plain on tablets."
  - Paul tells Timothy to "guard the good deposit" entrusted to him.
  - *Both stress clarity, preservation, and transmission of faith for future generations.*
- **Habakkuk** mirrors frustrations with local problems (justice delayed, poverty cycles, systems that don't work).
- **2 Timothy** mirrors encouragement to young leaders, teachers, and faithful people in the community to keep living and passing on faith boldly.
- Together, they say: **Name the injustice honestly (Habakkuk), and live out faith courageously (Timothy).**





## Intercessory Prayer

*Last week, we talked about prayer a lot ... again.*

### What It Is

**Intercessory prayer** is when a person prays on behalf of others. Instead of focusing only on one's own needs, the intercessor "stands in the gap" (to use biblical imagery) and petitions God for another person, community, or even the world.

- **Biblical roots:** Abraham interceding for Sodom (Genesis 18), Moses interceding for Israel (Exodus 32), and Jesus interceding for his disciples (John 17). Paul also asked churches to intercede for him (Ephesians 6:18–19).
- **Theology:** It reflects the belief that God listens to prayers offered in compassion and solidarity, and that prayer is not merely individual but communal.

### Key Features

- **Others-focused:** Directed outward, rather than inward.
- **Empathetic:** Seeks to bear another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- **Mediatory in tone:** Sometimes described as partnering with Christ, who is seen as the ultimate intercessor (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25).
- **Can be structured or spontaneous:** In liturgy (formal prayers of the people) or in private devotion.

### Historical/Non-Biblical/Political Context

- **Early Church:** Intercession was central in Christian worship, often naming rulers, the sick, the poor, and the persecuted.
- **Medieval Christianity:** Intercession became tied to saints, who were believed to intercede for believers before God.
- **Modern Context:** In many traditions (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal, etc.), intercessory prayer still takes a prominent role—sometimes even in public life, such as vigils after disasters.

### Scholarly/Theological Metaphors

- **"Standing in the gap" (Ezekiel 22:30):** The intercessor is like a bridge between God's mercy and human need.
- **"Spiritual advocacy":** Like an attorney making a case, but on a spiritual level.
- **"Participating in God's compassion":** Not persuading God, but aligning oneself with God's desire for wholeness and justice.

### Modern-Day Relevance

- **Community prayer chains** or prayer groups are practical forms of intercessory prayer.
- **Grant County / local church context (thinking of your teaching environment):** It can be powerful to show how praying for neighbors, farmers, local officials, or schools helps bind a community together. It makes prayer less abstract and more rooted in shared needs.
- **Critiques & debates:** Some studies on intercessory prayer (such as those in medical contexts) have questioned its measurable effects, but from a theological perspective, its purpose is less about "results" and more about solidarity, compassion, and relationship with God.





## Summary

Intercessory prayer is the practice of praying for others, rooted in scripture and carried through church history. It is seen as an act of compassion, solidarity, and alignment with Christ's ongoing intercession for humanity. Whether in ancient Israel, the early church, or modern congregations, intercessory prayer reflects the communal dimension of faith—recognizing that our spiritual lives are not just about “me and God,” but about “us and God.”

## Intercessory Prayer Across Christian Traditions

Tradition	Who prays on behalf of others?	How It's Practiced	Emphasis / Theology
<b>Catholic</b>	Believers, priests, Mary, and the saints	“Prayers of the Faithful” in Mass; prayer to saints for their intercession	Communion of Saints; Church as a praying body; priests as mediators
<b>Orthodox</b>	Believers, Mary (Mother of Jesus), saints	Litanies in Divine Liturgy; long prayers for rulers, the sick, and departed	Mystical participation in God's healing work; strong sense of cosmic prayer
<b>Protestant (Mainline: Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.)</b>	Believers directly to God through Christ	Congregational prayer time; “Prayers of the People” in liturgy; personal prayer	No saints; focus on both personal needs and systemic issues (justice, peace, poverty)
<b>Evangelical / Pentecostal</b>	Believers directly to God, in Jesus' name	Spontaneous, Spirit-led prayer; laying on of hands; prayer chains & “prayer warriors”	Expectant faith in God's immediate intervention (healing, miracles, protection)
<b>Methodist / Wesleyan</b>	Believers directly to God	Prayers of the People in worship; class meetings and small groups; personal devotion	Blend of personal holiness and social concern; influenced by John Wesley's balance
<b>Shared Core</b>	All Christians believe Christ is the ultimate intercessor (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)	Prayers offered for others' needs, local and global	Expresses love for neighbor, solidarity, and alignment with God's will

- Christians seek God's help not only for themselves but for others.
- Different traditions complement each other — one emphasizes structure and unity (Catholic/Orthodox), another spontaneity and expectation (Pentecostal), another systemic justice (mainline), another balance (Methodist).

## Catholic (from Mass – “Prayers of the Faithful”)

- *Formal, structured, communal.*
- **Leader:** For the Church throughout the world, that she may proclaim the Gospel with compassion and courage. We pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, hear our prayer.
- **Leader:** For leaders of nations, that they may govern with justice and promote peace. We pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, hear our prayer.



- **Leader:** For the sick and suffering, especially [names], that they may know the healing love of Christ. We pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, hear our prayer.

### Orthodox (Litany of Fervent Supplication)

- *Chanted, repetitive, cosmic in scope.*
- **Priest:** Let us all say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say:  
**People:** Lord, have mercy.
- **Priest:** For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, have mercy.
- **Priest:** For our country, for those in authority, and for all in public service, let us pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, have mercy.
- **Priest:** For the sick and suffering, for captives, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.  
**People:** Lord, have mercy.

### Protestant (Mainline – United Methodist example)

*Conversational, justice-oriented, flexible.*

Gracious God,  
We lift before you those who are weary and heavy laden, that they may find rest.  
We pray for communities torn by violence, that peace and reconciliation may prevail.  
We remember the poor, the unemployed, and the hungry, that they may be sustained by your abundance.  
And we pray for our leaders — local, national, and global — that they may seek wisdom, justice, and mercy in all their decisions.  
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

### Evangelical / Pentecostal

*Spontaneous, emotional, Spirit-led.*

Heavenly Father, we come before You tonight believing in Your power!  
Lord, we lift up Sarah right now — touch her body with healing in Jesus' name!  
Break every chain of fear and depression among our young people, Lord.  
Father, pour out Your Spirit on this city, bring revival, bring families back to You.  
We declare Your victory, Lord, and we thank You in advance for what You are already doing!  
Amen!

### SIX CHIX

