

Trust Issues | Ready to Rumble

Aaron Brockett | Habakkuk 1-3

How's everybody doing? Good to see you. I want to welcome all of our guests and first-time visitors across all of our campuses. I'd like just to take this opportunity to look right into the camera and say hello to our friends at our North campus, Downtown, West, all of you here at our Northwest campus, those of you watching online. It's so good to have all of you.

Today we are wrapping up this series that we've been in called *Trust Issues*. What we've been saying over the last four weeks together is that the currency, so to speak, of every relationship that we have is this fragile, yet powerful little word called trust.

Trust works a lot like a sand castle on a beach. It takes a long time to build, but it doesn't take long to destroy.

So we can work and work and work to build trust in our relationships, but then all it takes is maybe one wave of indiscretion, one wave of betrayal, one wave of criticism and it just sort of knocks it out and so we want to be really careful in how we deal with and handle the trust that's in our relationships.

For many of us, well, for all of us, we've all been hurt. We've all been betrayed. We've all been let down in some way by the people whom we love and care about the most, and so just moment after moment, experience after experience with this, we can develop these trust issues.

What a trust issue is is when I begin to project onto future relationships and opportunities the pain from my past. So I'm a little bit more guarded and I don't necessarily trust what you say or your intentions or your motives, even though you didn't have anything to do with how I've been hurt in the past. I've sort of projected it onto you and maybe you've projected it onto me.

Listen, it's understandable for us to be cautious. I think there's a difference between being cautious and wise and skeptical and cynical. Those are very, very different things.

I'm not saying that you need to just be naïve. I'm not saying or suggesting that we should just become everybody's doormat. I'm not saying that. I'm simply saying this: If you become so guarded that you say, "I'm never going to let anybody close enough to hurt me again," then what you're doing is you're never letting anybody close enough to love you ever again.

So the answer isn't that we shut ourselves down; the answer is that we learn to redirect our trust.

The Bible says very clearly that we should never put our trust in three very specific things. I mentioned this a few weeks ago. They all start with P, so they're easy to remember.

The Bible says don't put your trust in possessions because those will fade away. Don't put your trust in power because that will elude you. Don't put your trust in people because they'll hurt you.

However, the Bible says a whole lot about loving each other sacrificially, which requires trust. The Bible says that we should serve each other gladly. That requires trust. The Bible says we should submit to one another. That requires trust.

So there are these two different things kind of going on. The Bible says don't put your trust in people, but also we've got to do these other things that require trust. There's a difference between trusting someone and then putting your trust in them. So trust that person; just don't put your trust in them.

I'll just use myself as an example. As your pastor and, more importantly, as your friend, I would hope that you would trust me. I want you to trust me. I can't demand your trust or tell you to trust me; I've got to earn it and maintain. But don't put your trust **in** me. There's a difference.

In Proverbs chapter 3, it says the object of our trust should be God. It says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not **depend** on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take."

That's a great passage. I believe that passage and I hold onto that passage, but I'll never say that passage is easy. I'll never say that there are moments when I don't struggle to put my trust in the Lord.

And this brings up maybe what you've been sort of struggling with throughout the whole series because I said this on week number one: Change the object of your trust. The object of your trust should be God.

Maybe some of you are like, "Well, that's my problem; like God is the reason why I have trust issues because I've cried out to him before in my past and he didn't seem to answer. He didn't seem to care. He doesn't seem to be around. I wonder if he even exists."

Several years ago, there was a young couple that was in Lindsey's and my group. Their names were Dave and Jen. They were in their mid-20s. They just graduated from college. They'd been married for less than a year.

They were the most fun couple to be around. They, both of them, had a great sense of humor. They could just make you laugh. Dave was really, really smart. He was an engineer. He got the job of his dreams.

I'll never forget getting a phone call one afternoon and they said, "Hey, Aaron, you need to get to the hospital right away. Dave's there right now and they've just discovered that he has a tumor in his chest and cancer's all over his body."

It was just totally unexpected. It came out of the blue. Really long story short, what had happened—I know there's like a medical term for this but—Dave had discovered that when his mom was pregnant with him she was pregnant with twins and then that organism that would've become his twin brother, he had somehow absorbed into his body and it had been there all along, like all 25 years of his life, and it had become a tumor. Now it was threatening to take his life.

So for the next year of his life, Dave would struggle and fight for his life. He was under chemo, all kinds of drugs, several surgeries. He was pronounced dead at the hospital one evening and then they brought him back, and it was just up and down and back and forth.

Over the course of that year, his struggle was more than just physical because obviously that's like about as stressed out as you can get. You introduce that to a family. They were newly married so there was tension between his wife and his mom and family members. It was a struggle.

At the end of one year, Dave was recovering. He was beating it, but it had given him a beating. I remember some of the guys in our group, we drove down to his apartment and he said, "Guys, I really need you right now." We came. We circled up around him.

Dave was down to like 135-140 pounds. All of his hair was gone, and he said, "Hey, guys, I don't even remember most of this last year. And Jen just told me she's leaving. It's just too much for her."

In those moments, your just like what do you say? What do you do? So I remember we were trying to get his mind off of everything. We needed to get him out of his apartment and so we took him to Red Robin.

I said we were friends. I didn't say we were great friends. No, but I love Red Robin. Unlimited fries. What's not to love?

So we go. We give him a burger and then we go next door and we just start walking around Best Buy because that's just what guys do. We just didn't know what to say, and I'll never forget. I'm pushing Dave around Best Buy in his wheelchair. Like 20-25 minutes had gone by. We hadn't said a word to each other.

I'll never forget. He's looking straight ahead. I'm behind him in his wheelchair. We're wheeling down the aisle where all the big-screen TVs are, and Dave says, "Aaron, will she ever come back?"

What do you say to that? I was like, “Dave, man I hope so, buddy. I don’t know.”

And then he said this. He goes, “Aaron, where’s God been this last year? Just sort of MIA?”

I’d love to be able to tell you that everything turned out just great, that Jen came back. Jen actually never came back. But I will tell you this, that Dave’s remarried today, that he’s beat cancer, that he’s healthy again.

Dave would tell you that his faith in God is actually way deeper, that there’s an intimacy there because he walked through that valley that he wouldn’t have otherwise.

Now Dave would never wish that on anybody in a million years and Dave would never say, “Well, I’d love to go another round with that.” He would never say that. But he would say that it actually drove him to deeper levels of intimacy that he never would’ve achieved otherwise.

However, that doesn’t change the fact that you and I don’t struggle with why God doesn’t intervene. Why does it appear that God seems to intervene sometimes and other times he doesn’t? Why does it appear that God kind of speaks to us and reassures us and other times he seems silent? What do we do with all that?

There is a prophet in the Old Testament who actually vocalizes these questions that maybe you’ve been afraid to, and so I want to encourage you to turn in your Bible, maybe your Bible app, to Habakkuk chapter 1.

Habakkuk is an Old Testament minor prophet. He’s got a really, really funny name. In fact, everybody at all of our campuses right now just say Habakkuk. I hope you didn’t hock a loogie on anybody in front of you. It kind of requires that in order to say that word.

But Habakkuk was a minor prophet who lived and wrote about 600 years before the life of Jesus. He was a different kind of prophet, and so most of the time, when you think about prophets, you think about somebody who speaks to people on behalf of God.

I am not a prophet. I would never suggest that I’m a prophet. What I’m doing though is a bit prophetic in the sense that I’m speaking to people on behalf of God from his Word.

Habakkuk was a different kind of prophet. Habakkuk spoke to God on behalf of the people. In fact, he was vocalizing the complaints of the people. He was vocalizing some real struggles that they were feeling.

And what Habakkuk says to God is pretty raw and it’s real and it’s unfiltered. In fact, look at how he comes right out of the gates. He comes swinging in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 1.

Habakkuk says, “How long, O Lord, must I call for help? **But you do not listen!** ‘Violence is everywhere!’ I cry, but you do not come to save. Must I forever see these evil deeds? Why must

I watch all this misery? Wherever I look, I see destruction and violence. I am surrounded by people who love to argue and fight.” So apparently they had Facebook then. “The law has become paralyzed, and there is no justice in the courts. The wicked far outnumber the righteous, so that justice has become perverted.”

What I love about this passage, while it doesn't seem very uplifting, it's real. He vocalizes some things that maybe some of us wonder if we're allowed to and he says, “God, where are you in the midst of this world that seems to have lost its mind?”

These verses introduce this question right here. What do you do when what you believe about God, or at least what you want to believe about God, and what you see from God, or see him allow, doesn't line up? What do you do in those moments?

Habakkuk teaches us that we can tell God what we're really thinking and how we're really feeling no matter how raw it is. God can handle it. In fact, he invites it.

I've thought about this before, that if God was insecure, there's no way he's allowing what Habakkuk just said to him in the pages of a book that's describing who he is to the rest of us for all time.

But God allows it. And he actually encourages it.

So what Habakkuk is doing is he's saying: Hey, listen, God, this is what I believe about you, or at least this is what I want to believe about you, but man, you're not making it easy on me. Because what I see from you and what I see you allowing, they don't seem to line up.

Therefore, what Habakkuk does is he wrestles with God. In fact, that's what the name Habakkuk means. It means to embrace and to wrestle and you do those things simultaneously. And I love that.

So what does it look like to embrace and to wrestle? Well, maybe it looks a little bit like this. I'm not just going to blindly pretend that everything in life right now, in general or in mine, is great when it's not. I'm going to wrestle.

I'm not just going to though criticize and quickly come to the conclusion that God doesn't care or that he doesn't have any power to do anything about this, so I'm going to embrace.

I'm going to hold onto what I want to believe is true even though I'm really struggling to believe it. I'm going to wrestle.

I'm going to hold onto God even though I'm not very happy with him right now. I'm going to embrace.

I think that for many of us, we have thought or we think that when it comes to God, when it comes to following after Jesus, that there's really only one or two options: You can either receive him or reject him.

So if you receive, that means that you've got to have all your questions answered, that means that everything bad that is in life has got to get resolved, and then if it is, then you'll receive him.

Or it's like, "Well, I've got all these questions that are unanswered. There's this pain that just won't go away. There are these issues that won't get resolved, so I've got to reject him."

Neither one of those things is what God invites us into. It's not just a complete blind receiving. It's not just a complete rigid rejection. There is a third way. There is a middle way, and I would say it's the only way. It's embrace and wrestle.

"I'm not going to let go of you, God, but I don't understand you. I'm not going to just release you, God, but yet, at the same time, I'm not very happy with you." And it's through that wrestling that God drives you into a place of deeper intimacy, trust, and stability.

For some of us, maybe we've even wondered at times this question right here, like, "Is it okay to ever question God?" Maybe you grew up in a household or you grew up in a church that told you that it wasn't, directly or indirectly. Like, "Hey, if you question God, that just shows a lack of faith on your part." Or "Hey, if you question God, that's disrespectful and he demands your respect."

Can I just say is it okay for you to ever question God? I don't want to be misunderstood here, so let me say it as clearly as I can. Yes, it is more than okay. And the reason why I can so confidently say that is because that question is all over the Bible.

You look at the Psalms which David wrote. David actually took the pain that was going on in his heart and mind and he turned them into lyrics. They are songs. They are tunes. In fact, one third of the Psalms, and there are 150 of them, so 50 of them are devoted to that question of questioning God.

The reason why David put it to song is because there's something about music that just speaks to the human heart in ways that the spoken word just cannot. And can I just say as somebody who does spoken words for a living that pains me to say that. But it's true. That's the reason why we do both every weekend. Because I want to speak to your head but I also want to speak to your heart.

David speaks to the heart by taking these very real pains. He puts them to song.

We see whole books of the Bible are devoted to that question. It's not like a footnote; it's the thesis. So Lamentations and Jeremiah and Job, all of these books deal with the question of

“God, can you really be trusted? And if so, why are you allowing this to happen in this world and in my life?”

More than almost anyone, David just models this embracing and wrestling so well. You read through Psalms and in one verse David will cry out and he’ll say: Where are you, God? And then in the very next verse he’ll say: Well you’re so close to me I can hardly breathe.

Which is it, David? And David would go both. I’m embracing and I’m wrestling.

I think that at times well-meaning Christians, in our moment of pain and confusion, maybe say things that maybe are nonetheless true, but it’s not necessarily helpful because timing is everything.

Have you ever gone through like a real loss, a real struggle, real hurt in your life and have you ever had a well-meaning Christian just kind of bat their eyes and fold their hands and say, “Well, God will make a way.” Or my favorite, “You know, when God closes a door he opens a window.” And you just want to dropkick them. In the love of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, you just want to lay hands on them.

Listen, do I believe God will make a way? Absolutely I do. Do I believe that when God closes a door he opens a window? I guess, yes, he does. Grandma’s cross-stitching just went into my mind.

Yes.

Do I need to pick my moment to declare that? Absolutely. And I think some of us are so uncomfortable with pain and unresolved questions that we just can’t stand it and so we have to open our big fat mouths way too soon.

I’ve even like felt this even in our community over the last week or so. People make all kinds of commentary. “Well, you know, that person should really respond this way to this tragedy” or “they should grieve this way” or “I don’t understand why they’re responding that way.”

Could you just like shutty? It’s an act of the Holy Spirit to just shut your mouth. Me included. Because oftentimes, when we open our mouths, even if what we are saying is true, we’re actually sending a message to the person who’s struggling that it’s not okay to be un-okay. And sometimes we just need to cry more and talk less.

Jesus, in John chapter 11, whenever he hears that his really good friend Lazarus has died and he rushes, what you need to understand about that, and some of you know that story, is that Lazarus’s sisters had been text messaging him all day. “Jesus, you gotta get here. He’s not doing good. We know that you can intervene. We know you have the power to do something about this, Jesus.”

We don't really have any good reason why Jesus didn't. Jesus just sort of seems to be like my teenagers. He's just like on his own timetable, just kind of doing what he's going to do. He's just like: Well, I'll get there eventually.

Jesus, why? Why don't you get there? And he kind of comes strolling up and you know he's God. He's all knowing. He knows Lazarus has already passed away. And then he walks up and Mary and Martha come out and they just chew him out. They let him have it.

Jesus, if you would've only been here. Where were you? What was so important that you had to be preoccupied, that you couldn't get here for your friend, our brother Lazarus?

And right there in that moment—I've thought about this—that if I were Jesus in that moment and I not only knew that Lazarus was going to die, not only knew that he did die, not only did I know that I'm getting ready to bring him back from the death, here's what I would've done. I would've smiled and said, "Ladies, calm down. Step back. Watch this."

That's what I would've done. I would've been like, "Oh, I know you're upset right now, but here in a minute you're going to love me. Lazarus, come on out, buddy."

But that's not what Jesus does. What does he do? He cries. It's the shortest verse in the Bible, two words. "Jesus wept."

Jesus didn't feel the need to explain himself. Jesus didn't feel the need to defend God. Jesus just crawled down into that well right there with them and he wept with them.

You need that? Some of us, we have people in this life, that's what they need more than anything. And what we learn from Habakkuk is that God says: Hey, hit me with your best shot. Go ahead and vocalize your frustration and your questions. I can handle it.

But that doesn't necessarily mean that what God says back to us is something that we're going to necessarily like or understand, and we see this in verse 5 of chapter 1 after Habakkuk lets him have it.

Here was God's reply to him. "The Lord replied, 'Look around at the nations; look and be amazed!'" and I'd be like all right, sweet! Finally, I got your attention. You're going to come through.

"For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it." All right, tell me, God. Tell me what is it that you're going to do?

And then he says this in verse 6. "I am raising up the Babylonians," and now if you don't know, the Babylonians are the bad guys. They are the New England Patriots of their day. Horrible, despicable cheaters. "...a **cruel** and **violent** people. They will march across the world and conquer other lands. They are notorious for their cruelty and do whatever they like."

And that's good news? Like God, I don't think you heard me correctly. I'm asking for you to come through, like are you going to rescue us and this is the news that you bring.

God's not done. He's got more. Verse 9, he says, "On they come, all bent on **violence**. Their hordes advance like a desert wind, sweeping captives ahead of them like sand. They sweep past like the wind and are gone. But they are deeply **guilty**, for their own strength is their god."

I don't know. I could just think of some other things that I could've said in that moment to bring you comfort. God seems to be really bad at that.

So what's he doing there? This is so important for us to understand. God is not sending this calamity on them; God is actually preparing them for it, and there is a difference.

Jesus would say to us, "In this world you will have trouble, but I want you to be encouraged. I've overcome the world."

Every now and then, I'll have somebody who will sit down with me and they'll be like, "I'm in this crisis of belief," and most often it boils down to life circumstances and pain and suffering and "I don't understand why God does what he does. Therefore, because there are all of these really painful things happening in the world, I've either come to the conclusion that I don't believe in God, that I do believe in God but he doesn't have the power to do anything about what I'm going through, or he just doesn't care." That's just kind of what we conclude.

And I would just simply say if you just kind of run the logic around all of that and say pain and suffering, does that disprove that God exists? I don't think that pain and suffering disproves that God exists because he promised it. He gave us a heads up. He promised it.

So what makes more sense? If you believe in God or not, the pain and suffering aren't going away. So what makes more sense? Pain and suffering with no purpose or pain and suffering with a purpose? God says: Take heart, I've overcome the world. I'm going to redeem this thing.

There are different kinds of pain. There's pain because I've got maybe a kidney stone or there's the pain that my wife is pregnant. I've never experienced either, hope to never (especially the second; that'd be weird).

Very different pain. One is pain with a purpose; one is just pain.

God says: Listen, I've come to redeem the pain that you're going through. I'm not any happier about it than you are, but I've actually told you how this thing goes.

Did you know that's what the main point of the Bible is? That there is a God. He created us out of love. Something went terribly wrong, and he's done something about it and eventually he'll come to fix it. So you hold on.

But that doesn't mean you don't wrestle. It doesn't mean you won't struggle in the meantime.

Do you know what the biblical word for embrace and wrestle is? It's worship. That's what it is. In fact, we see Habakkuk's response here, but before God comes through for him, before God rescues him, look at what Habakkuk does in verses 12 and 13.

He says, "O Lord **my** God, **my** Holy One, you who are eternal—surely you do not plan to wipe us out?" It's almost like right? You ain't gonna wipe us out, are you?

Listen to these words of faith before he even has any real reason to believe this. "O Lord, our Rock, you have sent these" Patriots to... uh "Babylonians to correct us, to punish us for our many sins. **But you are pure and cannot stand the sight of evil.** Will you wink at their treachery? Should you be silent while the wicked swallow up people more righteous than they?"

You see what he's doing here? He's wrestling with God, but he's also embracing God. He's vocalizing the very things that he's struggling to believe, and he's saying: I'm going to hold onto you, God. You are my rock. Even though I don't fully know how this plays out, I choose to trust you.

There's a word for what Habakkuk is doing here. The process of this is that it produces an authenticity in our lives. That's what it means to be **authentic**. That you're not just like pie in the sky, everything is great. It's all okay. It's all fine. And you're also not bitter and angry and cynical and "There is no God!" No, you embrace and you wrestle and you worship and you sing out and you declare what you're struggling to believe, trusting that God's going to produce an authenticity in you that is irresistible.

What the world is turned off by is Christians who fake it. They're like, "Whoa, why are you always so happy all the time and why are you not real and you're not in touch with your emotions and your feelings."

No, actually what God has called us to is an authenticity. So yes, this is painful, and yes, this hurts, and I don't have very good answers to this, but I'm not just going to throw hope out the window. I'm going to hold onto God even when it doesn't seem to make sense. I'm going to trust that he's doing something here through this.

Many of us give up far too soon. What makes a good movie or a short story is when there's a tension about halfway through that if you were to pause the movie and you go, "I have no idea where this is going to go," that's what makes a really good movie.

When there's so much tension that you're like if you were to pause it, you would go, "I don't even see any way out of this," and if you were to shut the movie off and never watch the end of it, you'd go, "That was the worst movie ever!"

Well you didn't let it play out. And your lifetime is not enough time to let it play out. You have to take a long-range view. You and I? We are just a speck. We are just a vapor James says.

Don't give up.

You're like, "Well, I just never have seen an end to this." Well, you've only been around for 20 years, or 30 years, or 50 years. There's been a whole lot more history than that.

God has said: Would you just trust me in this? Would you just hold on? I'm doing something. I'm at work.

So God responds to Habakkuk in chapter 2:2-3. I love this. He says, "Then the Lord said to me, 'Write my answer plainly...'" In other words, don't be cryptic about this. Be as plain as you can. "...on tablets, so that a runner can carry the correct message to others."

In other words, Habakkuk, I'm not just going to tell you because I don't want you to mess it all up. I want you to relay what I'm saying to you now. And that would be to all of us. "This vision" that I've just given to you from chapter 1 of the Babylonians "is for a future time." You thought it was like right around the corner. I'm talking about the future. "It describes the end, and it will be fulfilled."

See, what you need to understand is that the term Babylon is actually a term in the Scripture not only to talk about a specific place and people but also to talk generally about the fallenness of our world.

If you recall Daniel, Daniel lived in Babylon. There have been a couple of books here lately. A good pastor friend of mine, Chris Hodges, talks about being faithful in Babylon. He's not talking about a literal place or a people; he's talking about the world in which we live.

Babylon. It's corrupt. How do we stay faithful to God in the midst of Babylon? And God is talking about the long-range view of history here and Habakkuk thought that they were coming to beat down his door that day.

In other words, God is talking about this cosmic chess match between him and an enemy who has already been defeated. I don't know if any of you are chess players. I am not, but I do know that if you get checkmate, you've won. And the cross of Jesus Christ is checkmate.

We have an enemy who knows that he's already defeated. He's like a wild animal who's caught in a trap. Have you ever been around a wild animal that's caught in a trap? Don't get near it. It'll swipe at you.

He's trying to take everything and everybody down as much as he can into the same destination that he's going. It's destruction, so he says: Hey, I'm going to do everything that I can to get you to question God.

And God's already won. God says: Would you continue to embrace? You can wrestle—it's okay—but put your trust in me. And that's exactly what Habakkuk does.

I love this. In chapter 3, before Habakkuk fully understands, before God fully comes through, look at his words. Habakkuk writes this. He says, "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord!**" Why, Habakkuk?

"I will be **joyful** in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my **strength!** He makes me as **surefooted** as a deer, able to tread upon the heights." And what I love about this is that, as we've already seen, Habakkuk has gotten raw and he's gotten real and he's been unfiltered, so he's not pretending everything is okay, and yet, at the same time, he's fighting to stay sweet. He's fighting for joy.

He's fighting and saying: Listen, I'm not going to throw the baby out with the bath water here and just say there's no reason for all of this. That in the midst of my struggle, that's when I need God's strength the most. That when life has kind of got me rocked back on my heels, that's when I need to be as surefooted as I can.

So Habakkuk's response to God, what he's doing there is he's worshiping. He's embracing and he's wrestling and he's declaring what it is that he's struggling to believe.

In fact, Paul writes this in 2 Corinthians. He says God's power is made perfect in your weakness because that's when you need him the most. So God says you're going to go through a valley and I wish that I could rescue you from every single valley, but I'll do you one better; I'll walk with you through your valley. And as you go through the valley, an intimacy gets developed with God when you embrace and you wrestle.

My 16-year-old son, when he was in the fifth grade, I just said, "You know, every single year I just kind of want to start like a tradition with him, just like a guy's trip.

My wife's grandparents have a condo out in Colorado. It's nothing much. They bought it back in the early 1980s. It's just got a couple of beds and a fridge. So we just said, "I'm just going to take my son out to Colorado and we're just going to go snow skiing for a few days."

At the time, when he was just a little guy, fourth or fifth grade, he didn't know what he was doing, and so we would get up on the top of the mountain and he would snowplow.

I don't know if any of you are skiers, you know that term, but it's basically take your skis and you kind of turn it like this and you just kind of slowly go back and forth like this. It is excruciating to be with someone who doesn't ski very well and you go down the mountain because...I'm pretty good.

So I'm with my son and I'm wanting to go and he's snowplowing down the mountain. It's like the whole time we go to the longest run at Keystone. It's a green, which is the easiest run. It's called Schoolmarm. If you go slowly, it takes you about 35-40 minutes to do it.

So here we are, just all the way down the mountain, and we're getting tired because it's taking so long. At one point, my son starts falling and he's getting frustrated. About halfway down the mountain, he just falls over on his back and he starts crying. He goes, "I'm not moving!"

I was just like, "Come on, son. It's going to be all right." He's like, "I'm so tired, I can't feel my legs," and I was like, "Conner, come on, buddy. You gotta get up."

Then he starts like blaming me, like, "If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't even be here. I didn't even want to come. I don't even want to be a snow skier," and it's just like this whole thing back and forth.

At one particular point, I just looked at him and I said, "Man, the only way down this mountain, bro, is when you get upright and go down on your skis. That's the only way we're getting down." And I said, "I'll go with you and I'll be with you through it."

You know, we've had several of those moments each year. You know, one of the reasons why I have loved to take him every year is just to watch him grow. Even like this last year when we went, he's flying down the mountain. He's doing blacks and blues and he's beating me down the mountain, which pains me to say that out loud, but it's true.

Yet, I wouldn't have traded those early moments for anything because what happened is that there was like an intimacy that got developed in that moment of crisis.

Some of you, maybe figuratively speaking, right now just in your life, you kind of feel a little bit that way. You just sort of feel like you're on your back. You're crying out to God, maybe blaming God. "God, I can't move. I'm not doing it," and God's standing there. He's like: Hey listen, I'll be with you. I'm going to go with you through this.

See, every single one of us is in or has been or will be in a valley of some kind. The Bible says a lot about valleys. It says, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are..." Can you say it with me out loud? "...with me."

Say it again. Just say, "with me." Two of the most powerful words in the Scriptures. "Hey man, I just need you to be with me right now, God."

See, I want you to remember this statement right here: Intimacy with God, how it happens, is when we experience his faithfulness in the valley. I can't explain every valley for you, but I do know that maybe God's doing some things on you and in you in your valley.

So maybe right now, like what are you feeling? Maybe what you're feeling is a little bit of loneliness. Maybe what you're feeling is a little bit of doubt. Maybe what you're feeling is questions. Maybe you're feeling insecurity and fear and anxiety and depression. Can I just say I'm right there with you?

Maybe you take those moments and you allow them to drive you towards a deeper intimacy towards God. Maybe you've just been thinking all along, "I just gotta be okay with it and receive or I gotta be not okay with it and reject." Nope, there's a third way. There's a better way: Embrace God as you wrestle. And as you embrace God as you wrestle, he'll develop this authenticity within you.

Here's what I want us to do at all of our campuses right now. I want us to stand to our feet and I want us to do what Habakkuk has done and I want us to worship God. I want us to sing maybe what we're struggling to believe.

I think that for many of us, we felt that this part of the service, that the worship time, especially when you look around the room and maybe you see some people with hands raised and eyes closed and they're smiling and they're expressive, and maybe one of two thoughts go across your mind. You're thinking, "Wow, well they think they're all that. Look how holy they are. They're life must be perfect."

It's the exact opposite. When does water taste the best? When you're thirsty. When does food satisfy the most? When you're hungry. When do we have our best worship? When life is painful and you're broken.

There are many things that I want to move our church forward in, and this is one of them: That we would become a better worshiping church. I'm not talking about a fakeness; I'm talking about authenticity.

So there's got to be something along the lines of like we've all maybe seen people before where you look at them and you go, "Man, they're just doing that for show." It's just hard to tell. You don't really know the motives of their heart. Or you stand there like this (Aaron crosses his arms and assumes a defensive posture).

Could there be somewhere in the middle? Here's what somewhere in the middle is. By the way, this isn't a posture of I've got it all together; this is a posture of I'm in need. It's what my little kids did whenever they were learning to walk. So when you see hands raised, that's not people bragging; that's people crying out.

Today, we need to worship. There needs to be an authenticity in the way in which we do it, and so here in these next few moments at all of our campuses, let's worship like thirsty, hungry, hurting people because we are. Let's embrace God as we wrestle.

Father, we come to you today. I pray that you would hear our voices. I pray that you would be present in this place. I pray that you would move us into this place of intimacy with you.

Everything within us wants to flee the valley, and I pray that you would keep us there and close to you, so that way we can develop an authentic faith that is surefooted when life hits us in our worst moments.

We ask this in Jesus' name, and the church together says amen.

Let's worship together.