

Have Faith

That is so easy to say and so hard to do. This might be because we misunderstand what faith is and what it might do. Today's readings offer us three glimpses into what the Bible means by faith.

The reading from Habakkuk and the Gospel passage seem to contradict each other. The Gospel suggests that one can do wondrous things if one's faith is strong enough. Many people understand this literally and then are confused and terribly disappointed when things do not turn out as they wanted. Habakkuk is in a dire situation. He had turned to God, but it seems to no avail: "You do not intervene" (Habakkuk 1:2). What response did he get? "Don't give up. Don't lose faith."

Paul's letter was written to Timothy, one of Paul's own converts to faith in the risen Lord. Paul encourages Timothy to remain steadfast in that faith. It's clear that faith is not solely a set of beliefs and doctrines; it is a way of life—one that follows and is

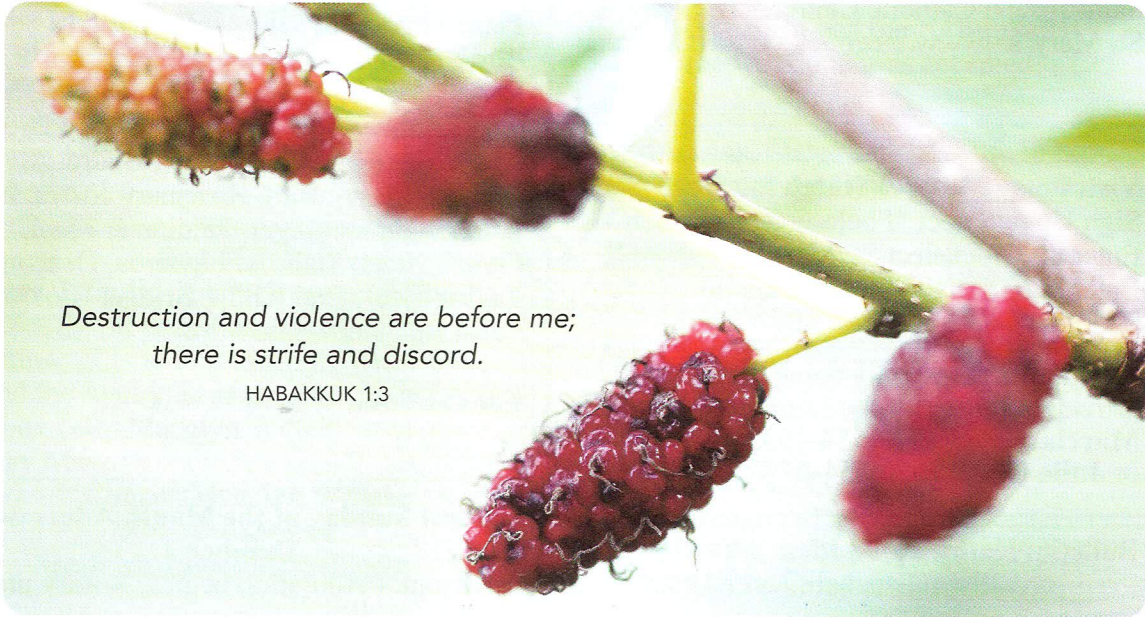
inspired by the example Jesus' life provides. It is also clear that living such a life might be dangerous, as evidenced by Paul's own imprisonment.

Reading the Gospel passage again after considering these reflections, one might understand the power of faith in a new way. Perhaps the mulberry tree stands for the struggles that had to be endured by Habakkuk, the danger that Timothy faced in a hostile world, and the hurdles that challenge our own faith. It assures us that if we don't lose faith, we also can do wondrous things.

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FOR Reflection

- ★ *For you, what is the difference between faith as what you believe and faith as how you live?*
- ★ *How might your faith help you get beyond life's hurdles?*



*Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife and discord.*

HABAKKUK 1:3

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