

Bethany Church
Small Group Notes in Habakkuk
When God Answers Habakkuk 1:1-4
July 26th – August 1st, 2015

Intro - The book of Habakkuk is a very special look at the mind and heart of a prophet. Books about the prophets and their prophecies vary in the amount of information they give. The stories of other prophets often record the happenings of the time or how the prophet, and even the response of those who heard it delivered the word of the Lord. In Habakkuk we have a much narrower focus. We are allowed to observe the intimacy of conversation between God and Habakkuk. This different approach is even highlighted by the absence of Habakkuk delivering God's message, within the context of book. Our focus is therefore drawn to Habakkuk as we identify with the essential complaint he presents, that God would allow the evil sinners to flourish. **That perspective though is shaped by the greater context in this book of when God answers, because He does and He will!**

Read - Hab. 1:1-4 - Habakkuk presents a complaint to God that is not too different from a question we have all heard, "How can God let evil go unpunished?" This is only a slight variation from the possibly more popular, "Why do bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people?"

Discuss

1. Habakkuk's first complaint (1:1-4) reveals a serious situation in the kingdom. From what you read in verses 2-3, how would you summarize what is happening around Habakkuk?
2. While we know that both the Assyrians and the Babylonians were threatening the people of God around this time, verse 4 suggests that the violence and wrong is actually arising from within the people of God through neglect of the Law (Torah). From what we know of the time, how would you describe the state of God's people before the fall of Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles 36; Jeremiah 11:1-17; Zephaniah 3:1-7)?
3. The word for 'prophecy' or 'oracle' found in Habakkuk 1:1 also carries the sense of a 'burden'. How might Habakkuk's prophecy also be a burden?
4. The 'how long?' of Habakkuk's prayer has many echoes in the prayers of the Bible, particularly in the Psalms (see Psalm 13 for an example). Why would God inspire a prophet to speak out these sorts of words to Him?
5. Have you experienced unanswered prayer or felt like God was absent from your life? How did you turn to God in that season of your life? What happened? How did you grow?
6. Do you think God ever does good, just, wise, and perfect things that are beyond our present circumstance or understanding to even see?

7. How is your trust level with God? What events in your life have shaped your ability to trust or not trust God?
8. Do you feel the freedom to ask questions of God when things don't seem right? Did your family of origin allow you to ask questions?
9. Do you think it is possible for God to be doing good without us even realizing it?
10. How might relationships with people whom you can safely ask questions, feel real feelings and be honest with help you walk with Jesus?
11. How is God speaking to you through the words of Habakkuk about crying out to God in troubling times? How does this influence your life of prayer? How does this shape the way you relate to the troubles of your life or the world around us? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and pray for one another. If you are studying on your own, write it down and share it with someone.