

A minor prophet has a major conversation with God about justice!

Week 2: Well you did ask!

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

Icebreaker. Can you think of a situation when you have found yourself completely out of your depth in terms of understanding what was going on? How did it make you feel? Was there anything or anyone in the situation that helped?

WORSHIP

You could begin by doing some or all of the following ...

- Read some or all of Psalm 104.
- Listen to a worship song or hymn which expresses the attributes of God, such as *So will I* by Hillsong
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyYn21RdBBQ&list=RDfyYn21RdBBQ>
- Share any ways in which you sensed God's presence in your life since you last met.

WORD

You may find it helpful to watch this short video from The Bible Project to get an overview of Habakkuk

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/habakkuk/>

Read Habakkuk 1.5-11 This is God's answer to Habakkuk's first complaint which we looked at last week (1:1 – 4)

1. In response to Habakkuk's cries of anguish & distress, expressed as questions, God actually answers him.

Have you ever cried out to God in a similar way? What happened?

Growth Group Notes

Summer 2021



2. Pete Greig, in the book *Red Moon Rising* writes this...

*'And then came the revelation from God that simply knocked the breath out of me' **God said 'I never forget a single prayer my children ever utter, even if they do'.** The very idea that the living Lord might diligently have treasured up every little prayer I had ever prayed, even all the ones I had forgotten, and that he might still be weaving their fulfilment, was almost too much to take in. It means that there must be answered prayers most days that I never even recognise as such, and casual requests I have uttered that continue to marshal the very hosts of heaven.'*

How do you respond to this revelation?

Read Matt 7: 7 & 11. What are the above quote and the verses from Matthew both speaking about?

Why is this especially important when we are struggling with suffering and injustice?

3. If you haven't done so earlier, Read Ps 104:1 – 13.

What does this passage say about the power and magnitude of God?

How does this fit with Habakkuk 1: 5(a)

How do we hold this together with Jesus' teaching about in Luke 15:1 – 7?

4. Read Habakkuk 1: 5 (b) – 8

What is God doing? When is he doing it?

How does this relate to Habakkuk's question in verse 2?

In what ways is God's timing different to ours?

The worship song *Waymaker* contains the lyrics *'Even when I don't see it you're working, even when I don't feel it you're working. You never stop, you never stop working.'*

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What have your experiences been of God working in your life when you weren't aware of it?

5. Read Habakkuk 1: 11 and Is 42:8

What will be the cause of the fall of the Babylonians?

What implicit warning is there for us here?

WHAT NEXT?

Habakkuk shows us not only can we have an honest conversation with God in which we can expression our distress and even our anger, we can expect him to listen and respond.

Look at your diary for the next week. When could you spend an hour with God talking to him about how you're feeling at the moment? Write him a prayer or letter expressing your thoughts and emotions and asking him any questions which are on your heart.

Keep the prayer or letter. If it's a computer file, you may find it helpful to print it out. As you come before God in prayer each day, physically hold the sheet of paper and ask him to show you that he has heard you and that he cares about what you have written.

Make a plan to review things after a period to see what you can discern of what he is doing.

Injustice and suffering have no easy answers. We don't find a neat simple explanation for them in the bible. But we do find what God has done, in the person of Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. Through his unjust suffering and death, evil has been defeated, new life, new hope and forgiveness are released.

If you want to think and read further N. T. Wright's *Evil and the Justice of God* is well worth reading – and relatively short (109 pages)

(If you're really interested I've just written a 10,000 essay on these issues as part of my curacy training!!.)