

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

Week 3: Now I'm really confused!

Spend time relaxing and sharing together.

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

- Read some Psalm 91 and spend a few moments contemplating some of its promises.
- Think of a time when you have been afraid or anxious. How did faith help?

WORD

Read Habakkuk 1:12-17. This is Habakkuk's response to the unwelcome news he received from God in vv5-11.

God has told Habakkuk that he is going to send the Babylonians to "execute judgment.... and punish." This seemed strange to Habakkuk.

Does it seem strange to you?

Habakkuk accuses God of being unfair to the people of Judah. God's perspective is obviously so different from our own.

How is this true and how might it help us to explain what is happening here?

Some people seem to suffer much more than others from illness, disability and the premature death of loved ones.

Growth Group Notes

Summer 2021



How can we best answer these people who say God has been unfair to them?

The title Daran gave to this section is: "Now I am really confused."

In your group share any things that confuse you about Christian faith. Discuss together how to reduce confusion on any points raised.

Habakkuk asks in v17 whether there will be any end to the oppression brought on the people by the Babylonians. He answers this question in the next chapter (we shall leave this for the next Bible study). We might well ask "how long?" about the present Covid 19 outbreak.

How confident can we be that there will be an end to this? Share some Scriptures which provide reassurance.

The whole of the book of Habakkuk is about justice.

What are the main injustices that concern you? How important should the fight against injustice be for Christians today? Suggest ways in which we should be involved locally and nationally.

Paul says in I Tim. 2:1f that we should pray "for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Do you find this easy or difficult? Someone suggested that we should pray with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. **How important is it that Christians are well informed about current affairs?**

The view of some Christians is that God sends illness and disease to punish nations and individuals. **How do you react to this idea?**

At the time of the rescue of the British army from Dunkirk King George VI called the country to a national day of prayer and millions of people flocked to the churches to pray. Many saw the successful rescue of the troops as an answer to prayer. **How do you see it?**

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

WHAT NEXT?

As we have seen, the book of Habakkuk is all about justice. This is a common theme in the Bible. You might like to read Amos especially chapters 3 and 4 to see how another prophet, writing more than a century before Habakkuk, dealt with this issue. He didn't exactly hold back with his language!

Jesus too spoke of justice in his first sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth. You can find it in Lk. 4: 17-19. But Jesus not only spoke about justice; he embodied it in his entire life and ministry.

It has recently been reported that there are more refugees in the world today than at any time in the past, over 82 million. Meanwhile some 76% of the world's population live in countries where severe restrictions are placed on their freedom to worship and share their faith.

There are many things you can do about this. You could consider making a one-off donation to one of the organizations which is seeking to help those who are suffering or you might consider doing a standing order in order to give on a regular basis. You could also decide to pray on a regular basis where injustice is seen or you could lobby the Government which has decided to reduce its foreign aid budget from 0.7 to 0.5% of its overall expenditure.

Here are the details of three organizations you could choose to contact:-

Christian Aid: www.christianaid.org.uk

Tear Fund: www.tearfund.org.

CSW: www.csw.org.uk.

[All three produce prayer diaries to aid informed prayer]

Keith Davies

Growth Group Notes
Summer 2021

