

message

Talking with God When Pain Looms Large

TURNING TO GOD IN TROUBLING TIMES | JUNE 13/14, 2015 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

HABAKKUK 1:12-2:1

"I will stand at my watch...I will look to see what He will say to me." (Habakkuk 2:1)

Eyes on God (Habakkuk 1:12-13)

- The character of God
- Engaging with God personally

Words with God (Habakkuk 1:13-17)

- The painful details of Babylonian invasion (1:14-16)
- Two lingering questions:
 - » Why does God tolerate the advance of evil people? (1:13)
 - » Will it continue forever? (1:17)

Waiting on God (Habakkuk 2:1)

- Standing watch
- Listening
- Preparing

study guide

1. Have you ever experienced a season of prolonged waiting, perhaps for a job, for a relationship, for healing, or something else? What happened and what was your experience in the waiting?
2. As we continue with the book of Habakkuk in our series, "Turning to God in Troubling Times," this weekend we look at Habakkuk's second complaint to God from Habakkuk 1:12-2:1. Take some time to pray, asking God to clearly speak to you, and then read that passage aloud.
3. Habakkuk begins his complaint in verses 12 and 13 by remembering who God is in the midst of the circumstances around him. What does Habakkuk declare about God and why do you think this is important for him?
4. Verse 13 contains the first of two strong questions that Habakkuk is wrestling with before God in this passage. What is that question (it is repeated twice) in your own words?
5. Background: Habakkuk responds with a complaint to God's word that the Babylonians will overrun Judah. The Babylonian Empire steamrolled the Assyrians and Egyptians on their way toward total domination of the region from 612-539 B.C. The Babylonians, like the Assyrians before them, were known for brutal treatment of their enemies, including driving a hook through the lower lip of their prisoners and stringing them together in a line.
6. Habakkuk uses fishing imagery in 1:14-15. What does this specifically convey about Habakkuk's people in Judah and the Babylonians' power?
7. What is the result of the Babylonians' brutal victories according to Habakkuk in 1:16?
8. With verse 17, we encounter the second of Habakkuk's strong questions of God. What is the question that Habakkuk raises here and why is this important in light of 1:13-16?
9. Many times we find ourselves struggling with the apparent success of evil people in contrast to the struggles of good people. How have you wrestled with this in your own life? How do you make sense of this in light of God's presence and power?
10. Habakkuk resolves his complaint by waiting on God, like a sentinel on duty in 2:1. What does he say about waiting on God? Why do you think he expects a potential rebuke?
11. How is God speaking to you through Habakkuk 1:12-2:1? How does this shape your life of prayer? 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.

[Next week: Our series, "Turning to God in Troubling Times," continues with God's second response to Habakkuk in chapter 2:2-20. Prepare for next week by reading this passage ahead of time.]