

Series: Questioning God; Sermon: **Why Does What You Do Seem Unjust?**
delivered by **Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on August 9, 2020

Bible text explored: Habakkuk 1:12–2:20

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

¹²LORD, are you not from everlasting?
My God, my Holy One, you will never die.
You, LORD, have appointed them to execute
judgment;
you, my Rock, have ordained them to
punish.

¹³Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?
Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than
themselves?

¹⁴You have made people like the fish in the sea,
like the sea creatures that have no ruler.

¹⁵The wicked foe pulls all of them up with
hooks,
he catches them in his net,
he gathers them up in his dragnet;
and so he rejoices and is glad.

¹⁶Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and burns incense to his dragnet,
for by his net he lives in luxury
and enjoys the choicest food.

¹⁷Is he to keep on emptying his net,
destroying nations without mercy?

²I will stand at my watch
and station myself on the ramparts;
I will look to see what he will say to me,
[and what to answer when I am rebuked].
NIV text note

The LORD's Answer

²Then the LORD replied:
“Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald may run with it.
³For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it;
it will certainly come
and will not delay.

⁴“See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—but the
righteous person will live by his
faithfulness—

⁵indeed, wine betrays him;
he is arrogant and never at rest.
Because he is as greedy as the grave
and like death is never satisfied,
he gathers to himself all the nations
and takes captive all the peoples.

⁶“Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule
and scorn, saying,

“Woe to him who piles up stolen goods
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
How long must this go on?”

⁷Will not your creditors suddenly arise?
Will they not wake up and make you
tremble?

Then you will become their prey.

⁸Because you have plundered many nations,
the peoples who are left will plunder you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and
everyone in them.

⁹“Woe to him who builds his house by unjust
gain,
setting his nest on high
to escape the clutches of ruin!

¹⁰You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting
your life.

¹¹The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo
it.

¹²“Woe to him who builds a city with
bloodshed
and establishes a town by injustice!

¹³Has not the LORD Almighty determined
that the people's labor is only fuel for the
fire,
that the nations exhaust themselves for
nothing?

¹⁴For the earth will be filled with the
knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁵“Woe to him who gives drink to his
neighbors,
pouring it from the wineskin till they are
drunk,
so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!

¹⁶You will be filled with shame instead of glory.
 Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed!
 The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you,
 and disgrace will cover your glory.
¹⁷The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
 and your destruction of animals will terrify you.
 For you have shed human blood;
 you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

¹⁸“Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman?
 Or an image that teaches lies?
 For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation;
 he makes idols that cannot speak.
¹⁹Woe to him who says to wood, ‘Come to life!’
 Or to lifeless stone, ‘Wake up!’
 Can it give guidance?
 It is covered with gold and silver;
 there is no breath in it.
²⁰But the LORD is in his holy temple;
 let all the earth be silent before him.” [ESV]

Review and application:

1. What two attributes of God (*1:12-13a*) reassure Habakkuk as he tries to process God's startling answer to his first appeal for correction or chastening for Judah?
2. What (*1:13b-17*) is Habakkuk's basic objection to God's announcement of what must have sounded to him like wholesale eradication?
3. To whom does Habakkuk turn (*2:1*) as he grapples with God's first answer (in *1:5-11*)? When bewildered by events, do we turn first to news pundits, to Christian spokespersons, or to God's Word?
4. How (*verses 2-3*) did God tell Habakkuk to handle the vision of his justice he had delivered, as to . . .
 - . . . its form?
 - . . . its clarity?
 - . . . its timing?
 - . . . its probability?
5. In what (*verse 4*) do the proud trust?
 How does God transform the hearts of those who trust him?
 What does “faithfulness” mean here? (See *Exodus 17:12; Isaiah 38:3; Hebrews 10:35-38*.)
 But doesn't this faithfulness—as the 16th century Protestant Reformers believed—necessarily spring from faith?
 (See Paul's use of this passage in (*Romans 1:17* and *Galatians 3:11*.)
6. Why (*verse 5*) can a drive for acquisition never provide contentment?
God now shows his opponents what's coming to them with five “taunt songs”:
7. How (*verses 6-8*) will their plundering greed provoke a reaction?
 How (*verses 9-11*) have they engineered the ruin of their own homes?
 What (*verses 12-13*) makes their crooked schemes “fuel for the fire”?
 What (*verse 14*): will the eventual outcome be?
8. What kind of cup (*verses 15-17*) will these revelers be forced to drink?
 How (*verses 18-19*) will man-made idols let their makers down?
 Name some idols being aggressively marketed to us today.
 What (*verse 20*) will hush a world brought face-to-face with its maker?
 (See *Psalms 11:4-7*.)