

Chat with the Children

- If you ask a question, say to your parents or teacher, or perhaps a friend:
 - what is the most frustrating thing they can say or do in response?
- Examples: say "wait", just not answer, dismiss the question as unimportant...
 - questions of God... sometimes frustrating waiting for an answer... but he will...

Introduction

- Remains of the Day?
 - repression of emotion is not healthy
 - and Habakkuk certainly didn't repress what he wanted to say to God!
- *Recap last week*
 - Q: why is wickedness unpunished?
 - (aren't you being hypocritical God, saying you are holy and just, but not acting?)
 - A: it will be...
 - Q: but isn't the punishment unjust...?

Waiting for an answer

- v.1: Habakkuk as watchman - watching to see what God will do... what answer he will pass on to the people as prophet...
 - sometimes we do have to wait (see also v.3)
 - but remain alert to what God is doing...

Listening to the answer

- v.2: Emphasise fact that God answered
 - significance of tablets, not just for preservation of message but also so it can be shared, passed on - and all who read it are to be enabled to pass it on...
 - his answer comprises a revelation, a vision of the future (v.3) - of what will happen with the Babylonians, but also that as a foretaste of the ultimate day of the Lord...
- And the answer is...?
 - God will judge the injustice, terror, brutality of the Babylonians also
 - their desires are not upright
 - God is calling them to account
 - (incidentally, the answer validates the question Habakkuk was asking in the first place...)
- This message of ultimate judgement is amplified by the declaration of "woes":
 - bad things that will happen if the current or prospective path is followed to its conclusion
 - its a prediction of the future...
 - but one which allows the possibility of repentance, release and change
- As well as speak judgement and warning to those to whom they are addressed, these woes speak reassurance and hope to those oppressed by the Babylonians:
 - God will vindicate your loyalty to him
 - he has not forgotten you...

Five Woes

- Woes are warnings, and tell truth into situations of self-deception
 - and are all related facets of the same fundamental warning to the Babylonians themselves, and those who would act like them...

v.6: stolen goods

- Lie: wealth is all, and I can get away with it
- Truth: you will be found out and called to account

v.9: unjust gain

- (close to the previous, but perhaps with more emphasis on the injustice than the wealth)

- Lie: some people are more important than others, and you want to be up the pile
- Truth: God will call to account, and the voice of those mistreated will be heard

v.12: built with bloodshed

- Lie: might is right, and my might is the ultimate truth
- Truth: the earth is the Lord's and everything in it

v.15: lust-filled abuse

- Lie: using other people for our own pleasure is OK
- Truth: this will bring shame and judgement

v.19: idolator

- Lie: something other than God is worthy of worship and can provide for my needs
- Truth: the Lord is!

One Conclusion

- What is the destination of the conversation?
 - seen that it is OK to debate, to question, even to challenge God
 - do his actions as you can see them match up to who he says he is in his word?
- God invites us ultimately to recognise who he truly is and respond appropriately:
 - "But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him." (v.20)
 - recognition and worship...