***A Study on the Book of Habakkuk:
When God Doesn’t . . .***

Habakkuk pours out his heart in a complaint to God, questioning him as to why he appears to be silent and uncaring toward the situation.

 Habakkuk must let go off his own expectations and wait patiently for God to fulfill his divine purposes in his timing and ways.

In the end, Habakkuk’s complaint gives away to a beautiful trust in God that is not based upon the prophet’s circumstances. When we face dark, painful, and hard times, we can out pour our hearts and unedited emotions to God.

WHEN GOD DOESN’T . . . HEAR MY COMPLAINT

1The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

First, we do not know much about Habakkuk; the Scriptures only record his name and describe him as a prophet (Habakkuk 1:1).

Next, “the prophet Habakkuk prophesied after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. but before the surprising rise of the Babylonian kingdom under Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C.

 This places Habakkuk in Judah around 607 B.C. during the reign of the wicked king Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34–24:17). Habakkuk wrote in a time of international crisis and national corruption. Babylonia had just emerged as a world power.

**Habakkuk’s Complaint**

2 How long, Lord, must I call for help,
    but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, “Violence!”
    but you do not save?
3Why do you make me look at injustice?
    Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence are before me;
    there is strife, and conflict abounds.
4Therefore the law is paralyzed,
    and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
    so that justice is perverted.

The book of Habakkuk begins with a complaint that the prophet is addressing to God. How long will the prophet have to cry out to God but God not hear him (v. 2)?

Is Habakkuk’s complaint a sin?

**“Even today my complaint is bitter; his handis heavy in spite ofmy groaning.”** Job 23:2

**“Hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught.”**  Psalm 55:2

**“I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.**

 **2I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.”** Psalm 142:1–2

In response to the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester a few years back, the Irish worship band *Rend Collective* wrote the song **“Weep with Me.”**

*Weep with me.*

*Lord, will You weep with me?*

*I don't need answers, all I need*

*Is to know that You care for me*

*Hear my plea*

*Are You even listening?*

*Turn my lament into a love song*

*From this lament, raise up an anthem*

*Oh, I'll sing it in the darkness.*

 In verse 2, Habakkuk begins his complaint by continuing to cry out to God for help, but there has been no response from God—not a single sound. Habakkuk even accuses God of not listening to him.

 What does this tell you about the kinds of prayer our Lord desires from us?

How do we respond when God appears to be mute and not responding to our prayers? What do we do when our most desperate and deepest prayers seem to meet the apparent silence of God?

**Consider this statement:** Silence is not the absence of God; silence is the presence of God muted.

In verses 3-4, Habakkuk continues his prayer by declaring to God all the violence that he sees occurring on the earth: destruction, killings, violence, and conflict. Yet Habakkuk complains that God does nothing.

Given all that has happened in this year, have you found yourself offering a prayer of complaint? Why?

**How We Respond in Times of Silence, Darkness, and Disappointment**

1. We pour our heart and unedited emotions to God*: “I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.”* (Psalm 142:2)
2. We continue to exercise faith and trust in God: *“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.”* (Psalm 62:8).
3. We can confess our doubts, disappointments, and struggles as well: *“I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief”* (Mark 9:23-24)
4. We rest in the faithful love of our Savior-God who cares for us: *“Cast all your anxiety on him; for he cares for you.”* (1 Peter 5:7)