

gospel there are people out there that are caught up in the world is that not a burden for all of us to share to go out and preach the gospel as derek was saying this morning to share the gospel to make disciples to speak to one another to go out with the word of god to go out with this message to go out with his promises how was the prophet's job habakkuk specifically set aside with a great responsibility for the nation go out to the nation tell them my message tell them to come back so that's our prophet but what does he say what is his complaint what is his prayer and we have his prayer there from verse 2 to 4 and his prayer there as the esv titles it is habakkuk's complaint at the top and in verse 2 it tells us there oh lord how long shall i cry for help and you will not hear or cry to you violence and you will not save why do you make me see iniquity and why do you idly look at wrong destruction and violence are before me strife and contention arise so the law is paralyzed and justice never goes forth for the wicked surround the righteous so justice goes forth perverted now immediately yes we we come to this prayer this personal prayer when he speaks to god it's not the first time he's prayed this prayer how long shall i cry to help shall i cry for help and even from that we can maybe detract that he's constantly in prayer because he thinks that god is not hearing him because he's coming again and again and again with this burden that he has with this complaint that's weighing heavy on him that he's passionate about

it's something that his heart is crying out about and we see here that he goes on to say we get the details of his prayer he says god's not listening to him saying or he cries out people cry out violence or he cries out violence it's almost as if he's saying this is violent and you will not save us you will not save the people you're making me see this iniquity in verse 3 and it's almost as if you god don't see it you god are it has no effect on you i mean habakkuk says saying i'm looking at the nation they're they're falling away from god they're doing violent things i've got to watch all this it's having a profound effect on my life and my heart i'm crying out to you in prayer and it's almost as if he thinks that god isn't bothered by there's destruction and violence before him strife and contention arise in this nation he's he's almost seen this country getting more and more out of control because they've turned away from god he can see disasters looming and he's praying there in verse 4 saying that the law is paralyzed the people have turned away from god people have put their bibles on their shelves the people don't even want to know about any god and it's almost as if the law the word of god it's paralyzed it has no effect in their lives and because this word has no effect they're not reading it they don't know what true justice is justice is just something that they make up themselves when it is good and what it is right to themselves they have no guide they have no moral compass because the word of god is set aside and the wicked of the country surround the righteous it's almost as if the righteous that are left the few that are left in his church the few worshippers are trampled upon they don't want to hear they don't want to know they don't listen to anything they say they don't want to listen to anything about the word of god that's not going to be a guide for them and so their justice is just something that they make up in their own minds and he says this is this is a perversion of god's justice he's crying out to god he's looking at this nation falling apart and you can almost you can feel his pain when you read through it we get a sense of his cry that this is just completely wrong the exact details of what he has seen we don't know we can't say for sure but having lived through

[42 : 22] Josiah's reformation having seen the temple full people praising god having seen watching this decline throughout that generation his heart's sore he's crying out to god why is this happening why are the people behaving like this how can it be that they've closed their bibles he's confused he's full of disbelief probably this is where he finds himself maybe even anger in his heart what this is happening this generation's going miles off track I wonder if you've ever prayed like that have you ever prayed for our country our world because you're seeing it getting out of control you're seeing laws getting passed and people doing things that you never thought you would ever see and you're witnessing this downward spiral and you're thinking are you seeing this god can you see what's happening in our country we're getting we're miles off track a few people attending our churches why is it like this it's something that should be sore in our hearts why are we witnesses to all these things maybe you don't even get as far as praying for the nation maybe you're only praying the beginning of verse 2 oh lord how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear maybe it's not the nations where the problems are maybe you're looking in your heart and you're seeing great problems in your own life and you're crying to god how long shall I cry for help and you will not hear be you're the one crying out for god to hear you maybe you're saying god listen to me maybe you're saying god respond to me because you acknowledge that you're full of sin you know you've gone off track and you want to get back on track and you want the lord to hear you you want the lord to

give you an answer you want the lord to save you you're saying to god i know you can see me i know you know the hurts of my heart i know that you're hearing my cries for help but you're not getting a response and you're asking god why have you ever prayed like that have you ever prayed for yourself have you ever prayed for your nation prayed for your family i bet you have but we find an example to inhabit to keep on praying to keep on crying to keep on wrestling with the emotions that we feel in our hearts we heard it this morning that the kids talked with a banana the boy kept praying for the banana believing in his heart or he would get a banana but you know

what i think as we get older we're maybe not quite so confident doubts enter our hearts and prayer is hard prayer is our label i remember listening to a sermon on prayer and it was saying we're under the impression that prayer is meant to be an easy thing we're under the impression that when we're full of the spirit when we're full of the lord prayer should just flow out of us and sometimes it does but probably nine times out of ten it's a hard thing it's a work it's a labour it's something we need to wrestle at coming back to god in prayer all the time to keep on praying knowing that he is healing us and faithfully trusting that he will answer in his time it's not easy to have the faith of children at times it's a blessing we have our own personal prayers that we wrestle with that burden us what do you have a burden for in prayer who do you have a burden for in prayer

Habakkuk's praying for the nation he's looking out and he's seeing the nation upside down he's praying for them praying to god hear us hear us hear us save us whose burden is the nation the people do we have a burden for the people do we have a burden for the people at Tarbert people in our families do we have a burden for the people of Harris the people of Scotland do we have a burden that they will hear the word of god that the word would not be locked away paralyzed but the word would go out with power and great effect do we have a burden for the leadership of our nation the kings queens because in government they would call on god what's our burden for this evening what is our prayer this evening what are we wrestling with god with this evening keep praying keep praying so lastly the response that we have the response that we have from god comes from verse 5 through to verse 11 after habakkuk's complaint he's looking out over this nation he's seen all these things that have gone wrong what does god say to him firstly verse 5 look among the nations and see it's quite humorous that he says that habakkuk's has been complaining about all that he's seen and god says look among the nations and see and i think he's saying that because he's missing something you're not seeing the wonder of my hand you're not astounded as it says there by what he is doing because god says i am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if i told you in this nation country it's up side down forgotten about god but there's a detail in this verse 5 that kind of changes it a wee bit all the commands that are in it look see wonder be astounded believe it's not that god is speaking them directly to habakkuk they're not singular they're plural you you all it is this is a response from god you all and i looked at that commentary on this and it said well this isn't a response from god because it's the way it's worded and i thought oh that's my sermon out the window but uh going back and going through other people it seems that no this is a response from god probably could be argued either way but i think in the light of the whole context i think it is right that we say that this is for the people it's not just a reply to habakkuk which it is but it's for more than habakkuk it's for all the people it's for more than him because there is more than him the righteous as he said in verse 4 the people the people that are left this is the message that the prophet would carry to these people to more than himself i am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if you were told and god goes on to explain i am raising up this nation the chaldeans a bitter and hasty nation this nation is babylon the babylonians they were the nation that came and destroyed jerusalem destroyed the temple took the people away and this is the nation that god would exercise judgment through habakkuk wasn't the only one to tell them this isaiah told them this jeremiah told them this habakkuk tells them here babylonians they're going to come and these people it tells us they're a bitter and hasty nation they've marched through the breadth of the earth they're obviously powerful seized dwellings not their own they're just taking everything they want they're dreaded they're fearsome their horses are swifter than leopards more fierce than even wolves their horsemen press proudly on they fly like a swift eagle devouring people they come for violence they gather captives so it happened to them like sand as easily as that they laugh at their kings their rulers they laugh at every fortress and wall that is built to protect them so as if this nation is coming and nothing is going to help them at all and this is the warning that they received this is the warning that Habakkuk was told to tell the people and it's probably not the answer that he was expecting to his prayer and often that's the case

God answers our prayers in ways that we would never have expected but this tells us here when we step back from it God is in control this evil nation will come if you do not turn to me you will face punishment if you do not come back if you don't get back on track again you'll face punishment and we can we can learn from this as well that we can we take a step back as we were saying Habakkuk seen the nation we can see so often the mess without seeing the hand of God in it the hand of God that is hidden the hand of God that maybe we need to look for again it's funny [54 : 49] I was sitting on one day this week and it's an image that we've probably all heard before and Katie has done her sewing she has a wee cloud that she started sewing and the front of it looks really nice turn it around the back of it is just knots and big loops that haven't been pulled through it's like it's all flapping about and there's crisscrossing and she was saying when I finish this I'm going to put it up on the wall and she was laughing at it going but not this way because it was a mess and we've maybe heard that image before it's like God has got this tapestry that he's making and we're seeing the back of it we're seeing the mess the way God's works we're not seeing it in its full beauty and glory until it has turned around for us we're maybe complaining we're maybe praying about the mess that we see and we look at this world and we rightly see a mess wars in

Ukraine but what did we have this morning 10,000 new believers since the war began 900 new pastors getting trained to preach the gospel it's almost as if we were told look again look at the work that I am doing in the midst of this circumstance that doesn't look great 900 gospel work 900 preachers going out of the gospel what an effect that will do in that nation the last verse there tells us that this Babylonian nation will sweep through the country like a wind and then go on to the next it's almost like a big tornado coming through a country wipes it clean turns it upside down leaves a mess and away it goes takes the lives of the people but it says that they're guilty men this is God's word yes they're going to come and they're going to do this but they're guilty men because they're trusting in their own God they're not trusting in the Lord God the God of the Bible they're trusting in their own God and they're guilty and they will face a punishment an eternal punishment as they don't call upon the God of the Bible but the Lord's people are only facing a temporary punishment through the Babylonians they'd be taken away they'd be punished for their behavior but it's only a temporary punishment those who trust in their own might those who trust in themselves those who trust in their own gods will face an eternal punishment the

Lord's doing a work in his day even when he looked out and he saw the exact opposite in his head couldn't see the Lord's hand at work at all and it's interesting when we hear of people coming forward we hear of people professing faith we say the Lord is at work when we see fruit for the people responding to the gospel and we may think that the nations have forgotten God but this report is coming through that young men are actually turning to the Bible and coming to church looking for something more than the world can offer them there's young men coming through becoming Christians out of what seems a mess and we wouldn't believe it is it the turning of the tide maybe hopefully but even if it isn't we would be wrong to say the

Lord isn't at work now if there's encouragement for you here when we look out into our nation we cannot say that the Lord is not doing our work that's what this passage is saying God is telling us he is doing our work whether we see it or not the Lord might be doing our work tonight in someone's life and we might be completely oblivious to it we might not see it at all and is it not a verse that we can take with us into every single day I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if I told it to you we can take that with us every single day and it is a verse worth memorising that's a verse there for you when you don't know what's going on when you're facing the difficulties whatever circumstances you're in you may not see

[60 : 42] God's hand at work but you can actually say well your word tells me today you are doing a work even though I don't see even when things are upside down even in the most difficult of experiences where you see very few in the church where you see wars refugees natural disasters when you're personally upside down God is doing a work that's what it says God is always at work this is a model that we see at the cross the disciples were there with Jesus they thought their king had come their world was turned upside down Jesus was taken Jesus was killed pressure of evil suppressed him looked like they wonder

I wonder what they were praying wonder what their complaints were was God at work definitely amidst!

their confusion amidst their evil was overpowering God was at work God was certainly at work through these evil leaders God is always at work that's what I want us to take away whatever our

situation whatever our circumstance whatever we see when we look out whatever we see when we look in God is always at work and we as the Lord's people should be trusting the God who works all things for good to those who trust in him but we must be praying we must be praying passionately with a great burden that God will work that we all will work through the preaching of the gospel through our minister ministers minor ministers major ministers all ministers the gospel will go with power when we witness to our friends when we speak about

Jesus God can do our work when people see us going to church God can do our work when we come to church God can certainly do our work when we're in sickness God can do our work when we see death God can do our work when we see war God can do our work God is always at work we don't understand it we may not believe it tonight we can say whatever circumstance we are in God is doing our work prophet prayed to God he saw the mess weighed on him heavily in his prayer but he got a response God will answer us God will hear us

God will save us if we trust in him if we come to him God may astound us God is working God is working Amen I conclude our time together by singing in mission praise mission praise 327 God immortal!

[64 : 57] God is God only wise and light and accessible heard from our eyes most blessed most glorious ancient of days almighty victorious thy great name we praise so we'll stand together we sing these words to God's praise singing voy!

voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! Unaccessible, lift from our eyes. Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days.

Almighty, victorious, thy name we praise. Unresting, unhasty, and silent as light.

Nor wanting, nor wasting, the ruthless in might. Thy justice, like mountains, I'm so in the bar.

Thy blood, which shall fountains, of goodness and love. To all life thou givest, to both great and small.

[66 : 42] In all night thou livest, the true life of all. We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree.

And wither can perish, but not change the theme. Glory be, Father of glory.

Dear Father of might. Thy angels adore thee, all male in their sight.

O Lord, we would render, O help us to see. Tis only the splendor of thy title lead.

In mortal, invisible, God only wise. Enlightened, accessible, lift from our eyes.

[67 : 56] Most blessed, most glorious, the ancient of days. Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

We conclude with prayer. Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would be with us in every step of life that we take, knowing that we can trust in you.

For you are a God that is not idle, but you are a God that is at work. So let us call to you in prayer the greatest of confidence. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.