

- Setting: revival under King Josiah followed by corruption under his two sons ... Babylon's dominance is gaining; the Pharaoh of Egypt imposes steep unjust fines on Judah ... **the law is ineffective** – paralyzed – immoral failure and corruption of civil and religious leaders (Jr22:17); the people mimic the example of their leaders
- Implied Habakkuk holds an official position at the temple ... He comes to God with familiar lament – *how long Lord; why is this happening Lord* ... He speaks from the immense burden that lays upon him ... A burden which he sees and experiences on a regular basis ... His prayers aren't new; they reveal his relationship with God – when he talks with God, he expects God to answer (1:2-3, 2:1)
  - I don't think we should assume by his questioning that he's lost faith in God – that he's being unfaithful ... Habakkuk is a man of faith – he's expecting God to act like the God he believes and knows and follows ... He's expecting God to act in accordance with His character ... *God, why are You allowing all this evil?*
- As expected, **God answers** – *Lift your eyes from your situation and look around ... I am at work ...* Our judgment of things is so often limited to the situation before us ... It's hard for us to see beyond what we're experiencing ... God's judgment of things encompasses what's before us and what's beyond us ... He sees the beginning and end all at once ... This acknowledges the difficult tension with God's sovereignty and providence working out in our life
  - Bible seems comfortable with leaving this tension unresolved ... This means for us, we too must come to a place of understanding and acceptance – FAITH ... We're not owed answers to every question ... Some situations aren't easily explained ... This side of Heaven, things remain not as they should be
- Still, God calls us to ask, seek, petition Him ... In so doing, we're to rightly remember the One we're approaching – not a God is unaware and unmoved by what we're experiencing ... Not a God who's unable and unwilling to act ... Not a God who's proven to be unfaithful and unkind to us ... He's deeply aware and moved by what we experience ... He's always able and willing to act on our behalf and for His good ... He's above and beyond faithful and kind
- The world isn't as it should be; we're not as we should be ... Christ has won the battle, yet the battle continues for a period ... In Christ, we have victory over sin's power and penalty, but the presence of sin still abounds ... Till Christ returns, this world remains fallen and we'll continue to suffer the effects of a fallen world ... *"Beneath every painful aspect of our humanity is the reality of sin"* – we're all connected to this reality ... We all share this experience
  - As we bring our prayers and lament to God, we fix our minds on what we know to be true ... At the same time, we fix our eyes on Him who is the author and perfecter of our faith
  - *"Hope does not come from a change of circumstances. Rather it comes from what you know to be true despite the situation in front of you ... you live through suffering by what you believe, not by what you see or feel."* ... We need to become people who regularly preach the truth to our hearts ... People who interpret pain through the lens of God's character and the sufficiency of Christ – all that He is, all that He does
  - While our circumstances change, our God ceases to change ... All our suffering has limits and purpose ... This purpose is governed by an unlimited God ... Who's sovereignly working on our behalf and for His good