

Suffering

- We live in a world cursed because of sin.
- *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death* through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — Rom 5:12-13*
- Spiritual Death – In the day you eat...
- Physical Death - to dust you shall return
- Adam brought spiritual death and physical death into the world through sin.

Along with Death – A Curse

- *"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Eccl 1:2*
- *I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. Eccl 1:14-15*
- *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time ... 22 we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Rom 8:18, 22*

The Book of Job

- It is far too complicated to draw any informed conclusions.
- Job's suffering had a spiritual purpose neither Job or his three friends could comprehend.
- Their conclusions – proverbs of ashes and all were rebuked at the end of the book for:
 - Not speaking of God what is right.
 - For condemning God to justify Job
 - For annulling God's Judgment.
 - Darkening counsel - words without knowledge

Life is No Longer Fair

- *I returned and saw under the sun that — The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all. 12 For man also does not know his time: Like fish taken in a cruel net, Like birds caught in a snare, So the sons of men are snared in an evil time, When it falls suddenly upon them. Eccl 9:11-12*

With Time and Chance

- *There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. Eccl 8:14*
- The Most Unfair thing of all.
- When bad things happen to the godly.
- Don't try to find an answer

Sometime There are no Answers

- *Consider the work of God; For who can make straight what He has made crooked?
14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him. Eccl 7:13-14*

It's Not Fair

- Cause & Effect Suspended by the curse:
- Father sends sun to evil and good rain to just and unjust Mt 5:45
- World is now turned upside down.
- *Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. 3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. Ps 73:1-3*

Understanding Finally Came

- *If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. 16 When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me — 17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. Ps 73:15-17*
- He had to do what we all have to do.
- He painfully worked through it until he understood.



Habakkuk

- *O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. 3 Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. 4 Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Hab 1:2-4*

Habakkuk's Struggle

- Cruelty and injustice of men
- Murder, rape, violence, theft, oppression
- Why does God allow these things?
- God's love complicates things.
- We look at the here and the now, but God looks at it from the vista of eternity.
- *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9*

God was Doing Something

- *"Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. 7 They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Hab 1:5-7*

God Wants all men to be saved!

- There is more to life than this world.
- An eternity is awaiting and God is working to make that eternity blessed for as many as possible.
- *"Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." ... 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, Jer 18:2, 6-10*

God Works to Save

- *if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it. Jer 18:2, 6-10*

Habbakuk sees the Extremes

- *Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die. O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. 13 You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he? 14 Why do You make men like fish of the sea, Like creeping things that have no ruler over them? Hab. 1:12-14*

Habakkuk

- The initial problem: man's cruelty to man
- The solution: Bring in a wicked nation to punish them.
- ???? Isn't that the same thing?
- *Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*
- Habakuk's Problem: Too Simplistic.
- Not looking at eternity ... only the Now

Habakkuk like Job wants to debate

- *I will stand my watch And set myself on the rampart, And watch to see what He will say to me, And what I will answer when I am corrected. Hab 2:1*
- There are no easy answers.
- No simple equation.
- We only have one dimension – Life under Sun
- God sees things from an eternal dimension.
- He sees the beginning from the end.
- Knows what needs to be done to get the best outcome for eternity. How can He explain?

The Righteous Lives by Faith

- Even with no answers ... Righteous trust God.
- *Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. Hab 2:2-4*
- God acknowledges Habukkuk's point.
- But it is too complicated to explain.

Righteous Live by Faith

- Life is not fair ... terrible things happen.
- Even with no answer we have the answer
- *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:36-39*

Jesus Warning

- Look at eternity and not only here.
- *There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:1-6*
- We are all going to perish... doesn't matter how!
- What matters is we are prepared when it happens

Jesus Warning

- Look at eternity and not only here.
- *Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."* Lk 13:1-6
- Even if we can't explain or understand
- *"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, Deut 29:29*

- When we do not understand we patiently and humbly wait. Seeking to gain the most we can from whatever tribulation we are in, regardless of why.
- Even if Persecuted I Pet 4:19
- Even if caught in midst of God's judgment on the wicked Noah; Lot;