

WELCOME 23rd June 2019 – 2 Pentecost '19 C

Habakkuk 1:1-5 & 2:1-4, 18-20

Good morning! Welcome to worship today! Special welcome to our visitors/guests! It's our privilege & joy to serve you in worship.

"Why?" Asked every human being ever born. Why this? Why is this happening...to me? Why this trauma? Why this pain? Why this unexplained suffering? Why this undeserved struggle? Excellent questions...and my sense is we never stop asking.

We are often confused about what God is doing in the world & we wonder why God seems so slow to act...or apparently does nothing. If you believe in God at all you **will** have serious questions that you cannot answer, or you may not like the answer God seems to give.

Which is why Habakkuk is a book for all of us. He's been described as 'the man with a question mark for a brain' & in a short 56 verses we have his conversation with God. It's a conversation where he asks our question, "Why this?" & discovers an answer that reorients his vision, adjusts his understanding & as God reveals he has never stopped working for the good of his people & his world.

Habakkuk & we are embraced by a God who wills good & grants what's best for us but often in startling & surprising ways...and then God enlists & equips us to be part of his response to a broken & dying world so that all might have life in him.

We'll explore & experience that today...

We'll also spend some time thanking God that he has enlisted & equipped us to be part of his answer for Wagga Wagga...& the wider world as God grows his kingdom through his mighty power at work in us...What a special day!

2 PENTECOST '19 C – MAJOR QUESTIONS FROM THE MINOR PROPHETS: WHY THIS?

FIRST DISCUSSION BREAK

"Why?" Asked every human being ever born. Why this tragedy? Why this pain? Why are those charged with responsibility so derelict in their duty? Why are those who know better so corrupt? Why is God seemingly silent... inactive... inattentive...absent?

Habakkuk asks *OUR* questions: the hard ones - the painful ones - the "I can't explain that" ones. Over the course of this morning...we're going to hear how God answers us... how God speaks to us...and more importantly how in our day God continues to speak to enlist & equip us to be part of his response to a broken & dying world... *The Lord replied, "Look around at the nations; look & be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it..."*

Habakkuk cries out & God answers. God is never silent never detached never indifferent...One of the earliest promises to God's people: *"I have certainly seen the misery of my people...I have heard their cries of distress...So I have come down to rescue them..."* – Ex 3:7-8 Habakkuk is assured/we are assured that God's hand is upon us in whatever circumstance...And God's plan is for our good...once & for all: *"He will crush your head, & you will bruise his heel."* – Gen 3:15 Brokenness misery sin death pain tragedy corruption decay...those will one day be gone forever...Look around, God says. Look around & be amazed...Watch & see me work in this world around you...

How is it that God is at work...in our day...in this community...through us by his mighty power? Sandra – Lynne – Trevor are going to give us a glimpse.

How is God working through _____? Why does it matter that Living Water is engaged in that with God?
Pray for those...

SECOND DISCUSSION BREAK

"Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, & their lives/spirits are crooked. But the righteous will live by faith." Pride is easy. And we are each afflicted. Charles Spurgeon wrote: "If there is a sin that is universal, it is pride. Where is it not found? Hunt among the highest & loftiest in the world; you shall find it there. Then go search amongst the poorest & most miserable; you shall find it there. There may be as much pride inside a beggar's rags as in a prince's robe; & a harlot may be as proud as a model of chastity. Pride is a strange creature; it never objects to its lodgings. It will live comfortably enough in a palace, & it will live equally at its ease in a hovel. Is there anyone in whose heart pride does not lurk?"

Pride is especially easy when we're trying to thank God for his blessings upon us. It would be easy to pray like the Pharisee, "God thanks that we're not like...but look at what we do for you." But the righteous live by faith...by trusting that every breath & every blessing...the good we enjoy & the good that flows through us is from God's grace & for his glory. The righteous live by trusting that God alone saves & acts decisively for our good & for the good of his creation.

Habakkuk hears God's condemnation of those who trust in themselves...who by greed or violence or trickery bring others down to raise themselves up...who advance over the backs of their neighbours...who go deaf to the pleas of those in need...who see the world as their playhouse their candy store for their pleasure & benefit disregarding those around them...*But the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.* With pride ever lurking...but faith ever clinging to God's mercy...

How is it that God is at work...in our day...in this community...through us by his mighty power? Mary – Philippa - Dan are going to give us a glimpse.

How is God working through _____? Why does it matter that Living Water is engaged in that with God?
Pray for those...

THIRD DISCUSSION BREAK

Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay & death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. – Gal 6:8-9

Part of what I hope we hear today is the encouragement to "not get tired of doing what is good." To feel a re-energizing of your spirit by the Holy Spirit.

We heard a bit about how God stretches our arms beyond ourselves...How do we care for one another? Encourage & support one another? Challenge & strengthen one another? Love one another? Carmel – Edna – Norma – Phil are going to give us a glimpse...How is God working through _____? Why does it matter that Living Water is engaged in that with God?
Pray for those...

FINAL DISCUSSION BREAK

"Why?" Asked every human being ever born. We are often confused about what God is doing in the world & we wonder why God seems so slow to act...or apparently does nothing. If you believe in God at all you **will** have serious questions that you cannot answer, or you may not like the answer God seems to give.

But God's ultimate answer to this world is this... *You were dead because of your sins & because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us & took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers & authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross...You have died with Christ, & he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.*" – Col 2:13-15 & 20

Habakkuk & we are embraced by a God who wills good & grants what's best for us but often in startling & surprising ways...Then God enlists & equips us to be part of his response to a broken & dying world so that all might have life in him.

Always remember...*God is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Eph. 3:20*

Let's pray with that in mind...**Gracious Father, you have claimed us as your own and set us to work in your world for the sake of Christ and for the expanding embrace of your Kingdom. By your Spirit use all our efforts and energies so that your church is strengthened, your mission furthered, and your Name praised. Through Jesus Christ we pray...Amen.**