

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I PRAYED FOR!

Habakkuk 1:5-17

Introduction: Habakkuk's prayer ("Help, Lord") and complaint ("How long must your church & I suffer unbelieving rebellion against You and persecution from the wicked?"). In short: *Lord, do something about the state of Your church.*

In our day, we too pray for the Lord to act on behalf of His persecuted, languishing, and often unfaithful (even apostate) church. What should we expect from God?

1. The Lord hears & answers the prayers of His people.

The Lord answered the prayer of His prophet, and He answers our prayers also.

The Lord graciously gave Habakkuk an answer – vv.5-11.

But Habakkuk was a prophet, with a special calling from God.

May we be sure that He will hear and answer our prayers? **YES!!**

IF ... If we go to God in faith through Jesus Christ.

In our sinful selves, both we & our prayers are unacceptable to the holy God.

But the Son came from heaven, Jesus, to die on the cross to atone for all the sins of all who trust in Him for salvation.

He now represents believers at the Father's right hand.

Hebrews 4:14-16: We may go *boldly* to "the throne of grace."

In his letters, the Apostle Paul speaks of his prayers for the churches.

We may join him in the confidence that through Jesus Christ who loved the church & gave Himself for her, our prayers for the church will be received & answered by the Father in grace and love for the sake of His Son our great high priest.

2. His answers may be quite different from what we ask.

Habakkuk's response to God's answer:

"Lord, that's not what I was asking for!"

The Lord's answer to Habakkuk: *I am sending the Babylonians to conquer,*
But they also will be judged by God.

Habakkuk's response to God: *"BUT ,,,, That's not what I was asking for.*

How can You, the Holy God, use such wicked & idolatrous tools to deal with the sin of Your people?"

The Lord does not have to answer believing prayer as *we wish* –

but *always* does so in accord with His holy and all-wise will –

as He did for His Son in the Garden (Matt.26:39, Heb.5:7-8).

Praying in faith is NOT demanding that God do as we wish.

It is trusting that He has the power to do that, but also yielding to His sovereign will in the confidence of **Romans 8:28-30.**

Could God send Babylonians to chasten His sinning church today?

He could & may. *If He does, He will also give persevering & sanctifying grace to purify His church in faith & holiness. 1 Peter 4:17, 1:6,7*