

# When God Seems Gone

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## Connect Break the ice and get people talking

- Tell of a time you worked on a project that took much longer than expected.
  - What's one of the most confusing books you've read or movies you've seen?
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## Truth Understand and discuss the scripture's meaning

**READ:** Habakkuk 1:12-2:5

Last week we looked at God's first answer to Habakkuk: that Babylon would be the way God would confront the injustice and violence in Judah. But the conquering Babylonians were even more unjust and violent than Judah. Confused by this plan, Habakkuk's second complaint has to do with whether or not God intended to confront Babylon's violence, and if so, when. God's answer helps us navigate times in life when his plan seems confusing and slow.

### CONFUSING

**READ:** Habakkuk 1:12-16

**DISCUSS:** In these verses, Habakkuk first describes God (vv. 12-13a), then the Babylonians (vv. 13b-16). Why do you think it's difficult for Habakkuk that God is using the Babylonians?

God is able to use sin sinlessly. He used the violence of the Babylonians as fitting discipline for the violence of Judah. However, the violence of Babylon wouldn't go unanswered. In the rest of the chapter, we see God's promise to judge Babylon too. He is a God of justice, and that means he calls every act of injustice to account. God doesn't call evil good, yet he can use it for our good.

### SLOW

**READ:** Habakkuk 1:17-2:2

**DISCUSS:** Describe a time in your life when God's plan seemed to be working way too slowly.

God tells Habakkuk to write the vision of Babylon's judgment on tablets – an ancient method to preserve writing as long as possible. This plan is going to take a long time to happen, but God wants the vision written so the exiles can find hope through it. Habakkuk probably wanted Babylon confronted five minutes after Judah fell, and we often want the fulfillment of God's plan for us as soon as possible. Part of God's plan, however, is his timing, and that can feel slow and frustrating.

## HOW TO LIVE

**READ:** Habakkuk 2:3-5

**DISCUSS:** How would you define the word “faith”?

How do we live and not despair when God’s plan seems confusing and slow? By faith. God calls us to trust him and his plan for us. But he takes it further, by telling them to “wait for it.” The way you live by faith when God seems slow is by practicing patience. Faith isn’t just a feeling of trust; it’s a determination to act in a way that shows your trust. The alternative would be taking things into our own hands. Living by faith means you leave the timing in God’s hands.

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## Grace See how the passage connects to Jesus

God calls those who live by faith “the righteous.” God gives us righteousness as a gift through Jesus Christ, because Jesus took our place on the cross. The righteous have good grounds for trusting God, because the same God fulfilled his promise to make them righteous. When God calls us to wait, confusing as it might be, slow as it might seem, he has already proven that he is trustworthy.

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## Change Apply the passage to our thoughts, feelings, and actions

- Are there areas in your life right now where you’re tempted to take things into your own hands rather than practicing patience?
  - Habakkuk’s vision on tablets was a gift from God to help the exiles live by faith. How are you building the practice in your life of reading God’s word to live by faith?
  - How can the righteousness you’ve been given by God through Jesus help you practice patience?
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## Prayer Respond to the passage in prayer

- Habakkuk recounts God’s character before his questions. Take some time in prayer to recall who God is.
- Stir up your faith by recounting the promises of God’s word over our lives.

### DISCIPLESHIP CHECK-IN

- Have you read your Bible consistently the past week?
- Who is someone you're praying to share Jesus with this week, and what's one way you can love them well?