**Small Groups Material - Habakkuk 2**

**Worsening**

**Welcome** (10 mins) Can you share a time when something in your life seemed to go ‘from bad to worse’?

**Worship** (10 - 15 mins) *Psalms 12 and 13 describe struggles, external and internal.*

* Read both psalms in the group.
* Give everyone a piece of paper or large post-it note. Ask each person to write on it, in their own words, a verse from the psalms which describes an issue or struggle that resonates with them.
* Then, choose a verse of trust or faith from the psalms which answers it.
* Then, speak out those words of faith to each other if possible without looking at them!
* Sing ‘Blessed be your name’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnWKehsOXu8> or (without pictures, probably easier to sing to) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du0il6d-DAk>
* Encourage a time of open praise and thanks

**Word** (40 - 45 mins)

*Last week we looked at Habakkuk’s deep distress at the terrible unfaithfulness of God’s chosen nation and the sinful behaviour which resulted. He had prayed and prayed, asking God why he had not acted! God does answer Habakkuk. He begins to speak.*

**Read Habakkuk 1: 5 - 11, 2: 4 - 5.** *(‘He’ in 2.4 refers to the Babylonians collectively but especially to their king.)*

1. What does God tell Habakkuk to do (v.5) - and what ‘amazing’ things were going to happen (v.5-6)? *The people would see a series of unbelievable events: 1) their own independent and prosperous kingdom, Judah, would suddenly become a vassal state; 2) Egypt, a world power for centuries, would be crushed almost overnight; 3) Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, would be so completely ransacked that people would forget where it had been and 4) the Babylonians would rise in power.*

2. How does God describe the Babylonians? Look carefully at vs 1: 6 - 11, 2: 4 - 5. What did the Babylonians think about themselves?

3. What warnings are given in Deuteronomy 28.15, 49 - 52? How would the Babylonians closely match this prophecy?

4. Digging into our Habakkuk passages again, what would life be like for the Israelites?

**Read Habakkuk 2: 6 - 14**

5. To what limits were the Babylonians prepared to go for success? Would their success be temporal or eternal?

6. Who is going to be judged? How would the Babylonians be judged? Can you think of more recent examples of oppressed people revolting against their oppressors?

7. How do you respond to the idea of God judging the nations? Are there ways in which you need to change your thinking?

8. How does God say that the righteous will live through increasingly difficult times? (2.4) What does ‘faith in difficult times’ look like for you?

How do you find you respond when times go from bad to worse? What helps you respond with faith?

*N.B. There are lots of questions here. Keep people moving, choosing questions which both help people dig into the passage and apply the principles to their lives.*

**Witness** (15 - 20 mins)

Go to the Open Doors website. Choose one or two situations and pray for them.

Have you started to plan a guest-friendly Christmas Social event for your group?