**Habakkuk 2:1-5 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. 2Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision And make *it* plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3For 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. 5“Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, *He is* a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.**

 Our scripture comes from Habakkuk tonight. Back on Men’s Day, James brought us a lesson from Habakkuk outlining the right and the wrong ways to respond to evil and injustice. We recall that the wrong ways were to join it, pretend it, crusade it, or move it away. The right ways were a gospel-based response – grief, humility, faith, ministry, and hope.

 Habakkuk was active around the same time as Nahum. We don’t know a lot about him other than that he lived during this time. This would have been during the time that the Assyrians were starting to descend and the Babylonians were starting to ascend in power. He righteously asks God, “How long?” I don’t know many among us who can claim to have never had this thought in our lives. How long shall I cry O Lord?

 In Habakkuk 2, I want us to take note tonight of the personal sound of this scripture. I will stand my watch. Throughout the verses, we see the word I and me and my. Habakkuk is highlighting the personal relationship we have with God. Too often, we get caught in the waves and wash of what others are doing and saying. We wring our hands and allow ourselves to be upset by the ebb and flow of society, public opinion, and the comings and goings of world events. Yet, the only person we can ever know… the only belief we can ever claim… the only salvation we can ever be sure of is our own. Jesus, in Mark 8:29, asks the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” It’s a personal question that requires a personal answer. He doesn’t ask who our grandmother said He was or who our preacher said He was… He asks, “Who do you say that I am?”

 Look at verse 1 there - **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.** Personal responsibility for his beliefs is what I hear here. He will stand watch over his heart. He guard his heart. He will not allow things that conflict with his faith to enter into his mind. And set myself on the rampart – the wall that surrounds the castle – where the soldiers stand and defend the kingdom. Habakkuk is preparing to defend the kingdom that resides within himself. He’s watching to see what God will say to him about his protest in chapter 1. Look carefully at the last part - **And what I will answer when I am corrected** – Habakkuk knows that God will correct him and he is open in spirit to that correction. We must all be open to holy correction.

 We too stand on the walls that surround our heart. We stand and choose what to allow through the gates of our soul – our eyes. In Matthew 6:22, Jesus says, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.” In Psalm 119:37 the author, most likely David, writes – Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way. Notice what must come before revival can take place…. We must turn our eyes from looking at worthless things. What are worthless things? The things of this world that rust and moths eat… passing away.

 Listen to God speak - **2Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision And make *it* plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3For 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.** How powerful is that? God says wait. God’s time is not our time. A day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day 2 Peter 3:8.

If we wait a year for something, it seems like a long time, but in the plan of eternity, our life isn’t even a breath! God says wait. Don’t get in a hurry. Don’t get frustrated. When we question God’s timing, we are questioning His plan. When we question His plan, we are making ourselves all knowing and telling God we know better. Our reverence for Him fades in our souls. Remember, our relationship with God cannot be larger than our reverence for God. When we make Him out to be someone prone to mistakes… and that’s really what we’re saying when we question His plan… we have less respect for Him in our hearts. We make ourselves greater by criticizing Him. God tells Habakkuk and He tells us – things may seem to be moving too slowly – tarrying even… when we look at things from our worldly limited perspective. God says – it’s not tarrying, I’m right on time.

Verses 4 and 5 **4“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. 5“Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, *He is* a proud man, And he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied, He gathers to himself all nations And heaps up for himself all peoples.** Pride causes the soul to go sideways. I’ll say that again – pride causes the soul to go sideways. God says that the soul of a proud man is not upright in him. Proverbs 16:18 Pride *goes* before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the Lord *is* to hate evil;
Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. God hates pride… why? Because pride causes us to think we know better than God… pride causes us to worship our own answers and not seek God’s answers and timing.

Notice the verse that says And he does not stay at home. As Christian’s, we need to stay at home. Our home is foundationed in the Bible. Our home is grounded in God’s Word and His promises. It is our witness that speaks to others, not our words. I can march in Washington with a sign over my head until I turn blue and I am nearly sure that this will not turn one heart to Jesus. But I can serve one person in need and love him unconditionally… I can visit the prisoner, love the widow, provide for the orphan, and help the sick and my witness may just help that person see Jesus.

I always ask myself about motivation – am I doing something to be seen by men or am I doing something to serve my God? Pride wants to be seen by men. Humility wants to serve God quietly.

Habakkuk gives us an incredible lesson that speaks across 2700 years into our life tonight. Will we stand on the rampart of our heart and guard our eyes? Will we turn from worthless things of this world, the talking heads, the spewing tongues, the fading possessions, and allow God to revive us? Or will we be proud and wander far from our Biblical home… what is our spirit focused on? It’s our choice each and every morning. God is not tarrying. His answer is not late. I believe with all my heart that He is allowing each person ample time o decide. He’s separating the good fish from the bad fish… It’s not the outer body He’ll judge – houses, cars, what we said when everyone was listening. It’s our hearts, it’s our actions taken in the secret times, when no one was listening… It’s how faithfully we protected His Kingdom abiding in our hearts… it’s how we answered when His Spirit came to call.