

**INTRO**

- What is something you miss now from your childhood that you took for granted?

In this Lent series, we're exploring how to trust God even when we feel His absence from our lives. We'll ask tough questions and discover that God is big and good enough to handle them.

**READ**

Hab 1:2-5

**REFLECT & RESPOND**

Despite being an ancient text, Habakkuk is still relevant today. He models an appropriate approach to God in difficult times when it seems God is gone from our lives and world—the way of lament.

Lament asks hard questions like “How long, Lord?” Or “Why?” Lament is emotional honesty before God from a posture of trust. It's not pessimism but heartfelt reality. God wants our honesty before him.

*Qu: Are you comfortable with lament? Why/why not?*

**RESPONDING TO SILENCE**

When it feels like in our experience or others, or in the world in general that God is absent or silent, it is helpful to remember that:

**1. Silence is how it *feels*, not how it is.**

Feelings are important to pay attention to, but can also mislead us.

*Qu: how can we balance our emotions with the truth of Scripture given our circumstances?*

**2. Sovereign Silence is Purposeful**

When we experience a season of unanswered prayers, ‘not-yet’ prayers, or when God feels so far away, we naturally want to know why.

We can feel God's absence for two reasons: sin can distance us from Him (Is 59:2), or He can deliberately withdraw the felt experience of His presence (known as the “Dark Night of the Senses”).

The second reason is more complex and disorienting because it's actually a good thing. God is using silence for a purpose. God can use His silence to get our *attention*, heighten our *desire*, and *mature* us.

*Qu: how can feeling God's absence be a good thing for us? How do we mature as a result of it?*

In seasons of feeling God's absence, what can we do?

- *Speak* to God about it
- *Ignore* the voice of the accuser
- *Remember* what God has already spoken
- *Listen* for God's voice through others

*Qu: Have you experienced a season of “sovereign silence”? What helped you through?*

**RESPOND & PRAY**

- Pray for those who may be feeling God's silence right now in their lives, for:
  - Comfort
  - God's purpose to be fulfilled