

Where are the Good Guys?

EPC Sermon 10/5/25

Psalm 37:1-9 He Will Not Forsake His Saints

- 1 Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!
- 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.
- 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.
- 4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.
- 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.
- 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!
- 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.
- 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

Habakkuk 1:1-4

Habakkuk's Complaint

- 1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.
- 2 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save?
- 3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.
- 4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.

Habakkuk 2:1-4

- 1 I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower, and look out to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

The Righteous Shall Live by His Faith

- 2 And the Lord answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.
- 3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.
- 4 “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Habakkuk 3:1-2, 17-19

Habakkuk's Prayer

- 1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth.
- 2 O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.

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Habakkuk Rejoices in the Lord

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

18 yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

19 God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

3 I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,

9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,

12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

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Opening

Sermon Series - In this world / not of this world
This world where evil exists AND The Kingdom of God already here!
How do we know the difference?

Let's look at Psalm 37:1-9

Psalm 37:1-9 He Will Not Forsake His Saints

- 1 Fret not yourself because of evildoers; be not envious of wrongdoers!*
- 2 For they will soon fade like the grass and wither like the green herb.*
- 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.*
- 4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.*
- 5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.*
- 6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.*
- 7 Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!*
- 8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.*
- 9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.*

This Psalm was written by David (many millennia ago ... thousands of years)
Written during a much different time and place, different society.

It still rings true, as it did for David, as it did for Habakkuk, as it did for the early Christians, as it did during the Reformation, as it does now, all very much different times, places, societies.

It has been used in worship since it was written.

It connects us to God and to all of his followers that have read this message.

It's message of Hope, Trust, Patience in the Lord; Knowing the Lord still give comfort.

It's message is not from this world (of this world) but from God (not of this world).

There is something different about scripture / the bible.

It connects us to God. It reveals to us his kingdom here on earth. It reveals to us how to live in that Kingdom. Its eternal quality testifies to this.

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To understand Habakkuk, we need to have an understanding of what was happening at that time.

Background for Habakkuk (2 Kings Chapters 22-25)

Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

Josiah Repairs the Temple

Hilkiah Finds the Book of the Law

Repent and revival

Josiah's Reforms

Book of the Covenant read and followed

Idols destroyed and removed from temple

Josiah Restores the Passover

Josiah died in Battle against Egypt

Replaced by Jehoahaz, he reigned three months in Jerusalem, he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord

Captured by Pharaoh Neco, tribute of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold demanded

Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim (son of Josiah) king and changed his name to Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but he taxed the land to give the money according to the command of Pharaoh.

Jehoiakim did what was evil in the sight of the Lord

Babylon defeats Egypt.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

Replaced by Jehoiachin (region not ruled by king of Babylon)

Jehoiachin did what was evil in the sight of the Lord

Three months later Babylon defeated / Captured Jerusalem

Eight years later Jehoiachin the king of Judah taken prisoner, everything carried off to Babylon.

(20-25 years since Josiah)

King of Babylon made Mattaniah king and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord

Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Jerusalem destroyed

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Now we can better understand Habakkuk's complaint. He was not seeing "good" guys versus "bad" guys. He was seeing bad guys versus bad guys! And each side was only getting worse.

Habakkuk 1:1-4, Habakkuk's Complaint

1 The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

2 O Lord, **how long shall I cry for help**, and you will not hear? Or cry to you **"Violence!"** and **you will not save?**

3 **Why** do you **make me see iniquity**, and **why** do you **idly look at wrong?** **Destruction and violence** are before me; **strife and contention** arise.

4 So **the law is paralyzed**, and **justice never goes forth**. For **the wicked surround the righteous**; so **justice** goes forth **perverted**.

When god explains to Habakkuk that the Babylonians are delivering divine justice / punishment for past sins. He adds to his complaint.

Habakkuk 1: 13

13 **You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong, why do you idly look at traitors and remain silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?**

Then Habakkuk waits for the final answer and gets it.

Habakkuk 2:1-4

1 **I will take my stand at my watchpost and station myself on the tower**, and look out **to see what he will say to me**, and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

The Righteous Shall Live by His Faith

2 And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

4 "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, **but the righteous shall live by his faith.**

Then he is reminded that God is in control, not the Babylonians. Habakkuk responds in prayer.

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Habakkuk 3:1-2, 17-19

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2 **O Lord, I have heard** the report of you, and **your work**, O Lord, do I fear. In the **midst of the years revive it; in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy.**

Habakkuk Rejoices in the Lord

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls,

18 yet **I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.**

19 **God, the Lord, is my strength;** he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

I can identify Habakkuk. I too see destruction and violence in the world today. I too see strife and contention. I wonder about justice. Why doesn't God do something? And it keeps getting worse.

Alphabet soup issues vs traditional family values

Far left politics vs far right politics

To vaccinate or not to vaccinate

Lack of respect, putting down one another because of differing views, intolerance

AND THIS IS JUST IN MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Throw in increasing violence in society,
wars, economic uncertainty

You get the idea.

No wonder depression is on the rise. How do we cope? Our world is not much different than Habakkuk's. It is changing and we may not like it. God can use change to accomplish His purposes.

We need to live by faith! Put our trust in the Lord.

2 Timothy 1:5-14

Guard the Deposit Entrusted to You

5 I am reminded **of your sincere faith**, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

6 For this reason **I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

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- 7 for **God gave us a spirit** not of fear but **of power and love and self-control**.
8 Therefore **do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord**, nor of me his prisoner, but **share** in suffering for **the gospel by the power of God**,
9 who saved us and **called us to a holy calling**, not because of our works but because of **his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus** before the ages began,
10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,
11 for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher,
12 which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to **guard until that day what has been entrusted** to me.
13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, **in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus**.
14 **By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.**

How can we do this? Connect to his Kingdom in this evil world.

1. Read scripture (example of Psalm earlier). Read actual paper copy (not digital) it is different.
2. Pray – talk to God – one on one. I am talking in private alone.
3. Like Habakkuk wait and listen for what God has to say to you.
4. Live your faith!