

Series: "Corona...Corona...Habakkuk"

Sermon: "Habakkuk, You're Not Going to Believe This!" (Part 1)

Text: Habakkuk 1:5

RGJR/FBCCS/6-21-20

- Good morning! Good afternoon! Good evening! Whenever and wherever you are listening to this. Thank you for giving this time to focus on the truth of God in Scripture.
- If all goes as planned, we will open the doors at 5590 N. Nevada Av. to worship **together** for the first time in around 3 months!
- Please pray that it will be a gathering that honors God.
- Please be there if you can and feel ready to be around other people in worship. In the "updates" section on the website, there is an extended note on why and how we will be gathering. Please take the time to read it if you haven't already done that.
- It is as much about "*having the attitude of Christ*" as it is about "*social distancing*"—as much about the heart of FBC as it is about the practices of FBC.
- Lord willing, we will begin at 10:30 AM, June 21. If you can't or shouldn't be there, we plan to have the service available live. There is a link to click on the top of the "front page" of [fbccs.org](http://fbccs.org)
- If you click sometime after 10:00 AM it will take you to a digital "waiting room." Someone will be monitoring that to allow you to "enter the service" and view it live.
- If you can't connect then, we will post the audio recording later.
- My sermon for today, live or recorded, is going to be intentionally brief. My desire is to use this time for the people of FBC to share testimonies that glorify God.
- In addition, as we are learning how to do this, we are keeping the service simple and short.
- Last week I pointed you back to an old friend who had spoken with me. This old friend was a Jewish prophet by the name of Habakkuk who delivered a "burdensome" prophecy from God to the remainder of God's people after many had long been taken into exile.

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- The message was to the rest of God's people who soon would also be overrun and exiled by a powerful empire of their day.
- The prophet asked a bold question of God: ***"God, how long will you let righteousness be overcome by evil in my world?"***
- The implications were either God couldn't see what Habakkuk could see so maybe God was less interested in righteousness than in Habakkuk. In this case the prophet may have been *"virtue signaling"* to God.
- Or, maybe God couldn't do anything about all the unrighteousness that was seeming to prevail. Maybe God was weaker than he let on.
- Or, maybe God just didn't care and Habakkuk was a better person than God himself.
- Or, maybe in his confusion, fear and frustration, Habakkuk had no one else to ask. Various psalmists had taught the prophet God could handle tough questions like these even if he didn't always answer immediately.
- This time, God does answer and he does so rather specifically. In order to shorten this time, I'm not going to preach my whole sermon on God's answer. I hope to do that next time. I will repeat some of what I say to you now.
- This time, I will simply introduce the somewhat shocking idea that begins God's response in Habakkuk 1:5. It reads...  
**Habakkuk 1:5** **"Look at the nations and watch—  
and be utterly amazed.  
For I am going to do something in your days  
that you would not believe,  
even if you were told.**
- ***In big ways, God often accomplishes His plan by means we would never expect.***

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- ***God often brings about his purposes and fulfills his promises in ways we might assume are contradictory to them.***
- God signals this tendency to surprise humans in smaller ways throughout Scripture but we probably should have expected it once we realized the Creator picked humans to "*bear his image!*"
- Think of some of the signs God uses to say, "*I won't always work the way you expect me to work.*"
- He allowed a tempting serpent in the garden
- He restarted Creation with a flood
- He let men continue to be choose autonomy but limited their evil with communication confusion
- He brought a promised child to too old people
- He used physical circumcision as a major symbol
- He protects his people in Egypt more than once
- He tells Abraham to sacrifice—to kill the son of the promised seed
- He often chooses the younger over the elder against all cultural norms
- He leads his people to slavery in Egypt and leads them out with a suspected collaborator
- He backs them up against the Sea and then parts the waters
- He seems to pick lots of broken even sinful people to carry out his plans
- You get the idea. And, of course, God's seemingly absurd ways reach a highpoint in the cross. Ignominious death on a cross becomes the glory of all human history. What seems every bit to be absolute defeat in death is actually total victory of LIFE.
- God's enemies are defeated not with more devastating power like their own but with the power of humility and sacrifice.

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- Again, you get the idea. God often doesn't do things like we might expect him to do them or even want him to do them. This is true for his eternal plan and for how and when he accomplishes things in our lives and in the lives of the ones we love.
- Things like a viral pandemic with its sicknesses, death and fear—things like riots and protests—things like job losses—things like economic troubles or ruin—things like cancelled church services and even things like selling a familiar "church building"—might not be how we would expect God to work or even want him to work.
- BUT very often these unexpected—unwanted ways are exactly how God works.
- ***This unexpectedness is nearly God's signature on events in life!***
- I'm not sure what Habakkuk felt when he received God's response to his question. ***Aren't you going to do anything, God?!!***
- *"Well, yes I am Habakkuk. I am going to do something so out of your 'box of thinking'—so outside your accepted paradigm for how life should work—so seemingly contradictory to how you think I should work—that you wouldn't believe me if I told you, but I will tell you anyway!"*
- If the events of these past three months have taught me anything, it is the lesson of a reminder that I can't put God and how he is going to accomplish his plans in my "thinking box."
- You can't either!
- That both makes me excited for my future, your future, our future and scares me like I am about to take the first hill of the tallest roller coaster in the world.
- If exhilarating fear is meant to do anything for believers, it is meant to move us toward more and more faith in God instead of ourselves for life and being part of God's plan. We'll see if Habakkuk agrees.