

The second most listed fear and anxiety in our church survey was what is happening in our culture, specifically all the evil and turmoil we see. Be sure to watch Pastor Walker's sermon if you haven't seen it.

BUT WHAT ABOUT . . .

Do you remember experiencing this as a kid?

Kid #1 will want mom / dad / teacher to do something about another child's bad behavior, (especially a brother or sister). But then, when it is their time to face judgment for doing wrong, they complain by saying, 'But what about them? What he/she did was worse.' Do you remember this happening?

Or how about as an adult. Have you ever been stopped in traffic by an officer and wanted to or did say 'But a guy passed me going much faster.' (This is a veiled confession!)

A DIALOGUE WITH GOD

For this week, we are going to the book of "Habakkuk" in the Old Testament. It is a dialogue between a prophet and God. To continue to learn about addressing fear and anxiety, we will read and discuss "Habakkuk." An outline of the book might be helpful.

- 1) The prophet Habakkuk is alarmed about the evil that he sees happening in his culture (Judah) and complained that God wasn't doing something about it. (1:1-4)
- 2) God replies with His plan to address the evil. (1:5-12)
- 3) Habakkuk then responds with a different complaint. (1:13-2:1)
- 4) God reveals a vision of His plans. (2:2-20)
- 5) Habakkuk is changed by God's revelation. (3:1-19)

If you can, read the entire book of Habakkuk and consider the following questions.

What are the evil actions that the prophet sees happening in his culture? What is his main complaint to God? (1:1-4)

Habakkuk was a prophet in Judah, the southern kingdom. He was concerned with violence, injustice, wrongdoing, oppression, and conflict.

A tip: Compare this with what God will address in verses 6-10. The same sins are named.

How will God address the evil in Judah (Israel)? (1:5-6)

He will send the Chaldeans / Babylonians as a judgment against Judah.

How are the Chaldeans / Babylonians described? (1:7-11)

Bitter, impetuous, conquering, plundering, fierce, guilty, and idolatrous.

Habakkuk was shocked and incensed by God's answer (1:5-11). What was his next complaint and the reasons for it? (1:12-2:1)

This doesn't fit who You are. You are Yahweh, my God, holy, immortal, judge.

How can you send them to punish us? They are not like you.

You cannot tolerate wrongdoing. So why?

They swallow up the more righteous. They defeat mankind, the defenseless, and they enjoy it. They worship their strength, get rich off others, and conquer without mercy.

What did God reveal about His plans and ways? (2:2-20) Which verses stand out to you?

He knows the truth about the Babylonians.

They are arrogant, prideful, and oppress others.

BUT evil is self-destructive. Pride leads to their doom.

THEREFORE: God pronounced five dooms:

- 1) Retribution for greed, violence,
- 2) Judgment for plundering
- 3) Retribution for injustice, cruelty, slavery
- 4) Judgment for drunkenness, devastation of nature, idolatry, sorcery
- 5) Judgment for claiming that wood idols can speak.

In chapter three, what does God promise He will do about the evil in the world? How might this address our own fears and worries?

God reveals that He is fully adequate to deal with Babylon.

- 1) He will judge
- 2) He will end the wickedness of Babylon

Further, He is all-powerful, glorious, majestic, etc.

For us, God is able, has a perfect plan, will judge the wicked, and end evil.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What are some parallels between the cultures in "Habakkuk" and our cultures?

Our cultures are still engaged in the same evils.

It could be helpful to allow people to share the evils they see that causes their concern.

In our church survey, anxiety or fear about evils happening in politics and culture ranked high. Are you surprised? Why do you suppose this is true? What ranks high about concerns in our culture for you?

Opinion / sharing question.

In this short book, what about 'the problem of evil' is answered and what isn't?

Opinion / sharing question.

Pastor Walker asked a critical question on this topic: 'Habakkuk cried out to God about his concerns and fears. Who are you crying out to?' Opinion / sharing question.

How does God address the questions about evil in chapter three? What do we learn about God and His plans? How might God's revelation address our fears and anxieties?

Opinion / sharing question.

APPLY IT THIS WEEK

We have heard that trust in God is often the key antidote to anxiety. What do we learn from "Habakkuk" that helps us know why we should trust in God? Read 1 Peter 5:6-7. He wants us to cast our anxieties upon Him. When we have concerns about evil this week, let's cry out to God!