sermon notes

Sunday, November 8th, 2026
Big Things In Small Packages
Habakkuk

key verses:

"This is why the law is ineffective and justice never emerges. For the wicked restrict the righteous; therefore, justice comes out perverted." Habakkuk 1:4 [CSB]

"But the person who is godly will live by his faithfulness." Habakkuk 2:4 [NIrV]

"But I will still be glad because of what the Lord has done. God my Savior fills me with joy. The Lord and King gives me strength. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer. He helps me walk on the highest places." Habakkuk 3:18-19 [NIrV]

historical context:

1. Geopolitical Shift: The Rise of Babylon

For over a century, the Neo-Assyrian Empire ruled the region with extreme brutality. However, Assyria began to collapse in the late 7th century BC.

- *612 BC – Destruction of Nineveh:* A coalition led by the Babylonians (Chaldeans) under Nabopolassar and the Medes destroyed Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.
- *605 BC – Battle of Carchemish:* Nebuchadnezzar II defeated the combined forces of Assyria and Egypt, cementing Babylon as the dominant superpower in the Ancient Near East. Judah shifted from an Egyptian vassal state to a Babylonian puppet.

2. Moral Decay Inside Judah

Before Babylon invaded, Judah experienced a swift religious and moral decline following the death of King Josiah (609 BC).

- *King Josiah's Reforms (622 BC):* Josiah had purged idol worship and restored the Mosaic Law. However, his untimely death in battle at Megiddo halted these religious reforms.
- *Reign of King Jehoiakim (609–598 BC):* Jehoiakim reverted to idolatry, social injustice, extortion, and systemic corruption.
- *Habakkuk's First Complaint:* The book opens with Habakkuk lamenting the rampant lawlessness, violence, and injustice within Judah, asking God why He tolerates social corruption among His own covenant people (Habakkuk 1:2–4).

3. The Theological Dilemma

God answers Habakkuk by revealing that He is raising up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) as an instrument of judgment against Judah (Habakkuk 1:5–11). This creates a second, deeper crisis for the prophet:

- *Habakkuk's Second Complaint:* How could a holy God use an even more ruthless, pagan nation like Babylon—a kingdom that worships its own military power—to punish a nation that, despite its sins, is relatively more righteous than Babylon (Habakkuk 1:12–17)?
- *God's Answer & Promise:* God instructs Habakkuk to write down the vision, assuring him that Babylon will also face ultimate destruction for its arrogance and violence. In the meantime, "the righteous shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).

4. Kingdom of Judah Falls

- *First Siege of Jerusalem (597 BC):* After Jehoiakim rebels against Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem. King Jehoiachin surrenders, and a second wave of exiles (including Ezekiel) is deported.
- *Fall of Jerusalem & Temple Destruction (586 BC):* Following another rebellion by King Zedekiah, the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem, burn Solomon's Temple, and end the Kingdom of Judah.

Introspection:

"Can I praise God anyway?"

- *Self:* grief, medical needs, acceptance, fear of the future, anxiety, depression
- *Home:* finances, relationships, children, busy-ness
- *Church:* dealing with past hurt, when is God going to show up?
- *City:* increased costs, homelessness
- *State:* medical assistance, education, division
- *Nation:* political and social divisions
- *World:* nations at war with one another

Actions and Thoughts:

1. God's peace surpasses understanding in the midst of every storm, like Jesus sleeping on the boat. "Then [Jesus] arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm." Mark 4:39 [NKJV]
2. Self reflection in times of trouble helps us determine where we are with God. "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I could learn your statutes." Psalm 119:71 [CSB]
3. How do I let the mess that's outside of me change the mess that is me? "Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing." James 1:2-4 [CSB]