

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 8 Aug 2021

Sermon Title : 2 Sides

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Habakkuk 1:12-2:20

INTRODUCTION

We have heard the common saying, “The grass is always greener on the other side”. There always seems to be 2 sides to a grass patch – my side which does not look so green, and the other side which is always greener. We feel that where we are is always not as good or unfair and we deserve better. Such a feeling could be experienced in different places. In school, we may feel that the CCA we are in is not as fun or warm as another. At work, we may feel that our office culture is toxic while that of another is friendly, sharing, well-knit and inclusive. Even in church we may feel that the ministry we are in is not as glamorous as another or the leader in the small group we join does not teach, facilitate or is as dynamic as the one in another group. This perception of ‘here’ not as green as ‘there’ may even be how we feel about the church we worship in.

But one wise uncommon response to this view is that, “The grass isn’t greener on the other side, the grass is greener where you water it”.

This makes much sense because if we believe there is a God who is in control, then wherever He places us, there must be a reason for it. Even if the grass where we are placed is brown or less green, there must be a purpose. So, instead of feeling that the grass is greener on the other side, we should think of what difference we can make with this brown or less green patch that we are in; how to make things better or how to survive through this patch of brown grass in our lives by watering it. Watering with reference to what is happening in Habakkuk’s time would mean for God’s people to stir themselves up in faith into trusting God, remembering who He is, proclaiming what He is and holding on to all His truths and principle instead of sinking into depression or discouragement. God’s people are to wait upon the Lord in faith.

Background of Habakkuk

Habakkuk was living in a tough time in Judah. Last week’s sermon was on Habakkuk asking God the ‘3 Whats’ in the midst of all the evil and unfairness he saw taking place in Habakkuk 1:1-11:

i) ‘What are You waiting for?’ (v2)

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- ii) 'What are You doing about it?' (vv.3-4)
- iii) 'What?!' (vv.5-11) – when God responded to his first 2 'Whats' by revealing His plan of raising a cruel and vicious people who were guilty transgressors, whose god were their own might and strength, to attack Judah.

What we can learn from Habakkuk 1:12-2:20:

1. Habakkuk waters by focusing on the attributes of God (Habakkuk 1:12)

Habakkuk's response: He calls upon the 6 attributes/names of God –

1. Everlasting – God is ancient, eternal and transcends time
 2. LORD
 3. God
 4. Holy One
 5. LORD – God has ordained the Babylonians as a judgment
 6. Rock – God established the Babylonians as a correction/reproof. Habakkuk was trusting in the covenantal name of God revealed through Moses to Israel and us; His works are perfect, all His ways are just, He is faithful, He does no wrong and is upright. (Deuteronomy 32:4)
- } Reminding himself of the hope he has in God and so believing that he shall not die

2. Habakkuk voices out his frustrations to God (Habakkuk 1:13)

Habakkuk's question:

Why God whose eyes are too pure to see evil and cannot look at wrong, idly look at traitors and remain silent, when the wicked swallowed up the man more righteous than he?

- Having faith in God does not mean we ignore things that are wrong and cause us frustrations.
- We can talk to God telling Him how we feel about what is wrong or our frustrations, being honest and authentic with Him.

3. Habakkuk continues watering despite his frustration (Habakkuk 2:1)

After releasing all his frustration to God, Habakkuk said he would take his stand at his watchpost and station himself to look out to see what God was going to say to him and answer concerning his complaint.

- Habakkuk still looks to God in faith despite his frustrations

4. God's plan will come at the appointed time (Habakkuk 2:2-3)

God told Habakkuk to write the vision down and to make it plain on tablets so the messenger might run and read it at the same time.

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- The message is made plain so that the messenger would read and immediately run out to share this piece of encouraging good news. (Habakkuk 2:2)
- God said it would come at the appointed time (Habakkuk 2:3) because nothing catches God by surprise. God appoints the time for His good news to come at His perfect timing. God promised it would not delay when the appointed time comes.
- God's promises will not lie. (Habakkuk 2:3) Even if it seems slow, it is because the appointed time has not come, but it will surely come. It will not delay because things do not change overnight. The grass that is brown did not turn brown overnight, it took some time to turn brown. Similarly, even with watering, the brown grass would not turn green overnight but it will surely turn green.

Watering means to trust in God's plan while we wait for the appointed time for it to happen. If it seems slow, we are to continue to wait for it because it would not be delayed when the appointed time comes.

5. The righteous shall live by his faith (Habakkuk 2:4)

- The righteous continue to trust in God, watering their brown patch, knowing that God will cause the grass to turn green again.

The opposite of faith in God is to trust self. When we trust in ourselves, we become self-made men who trust in ourselves to make things better and our souls puff up when things somehow become better.

As the passage continues, God assured Habakkuk that He would eventually judge the Babylonians. (Habakkuk 2:6-20)

CONCLUSION

When we are in a situation where we feel that the grass is greener on the other side, let us not succumb to depression or discouragement. Let us be authentic with God and tell Him how we feel about the situation but continue to press in there by watering our brown patch in faith, remembering who God is and trusting Him on His promises and principles. Let us continue to look to Him in faith despite our frustration, waiting for His good plan that will surely come at His appointed time; when our brown grass will surely turn green because His promises will not lie.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Appoint someone to read Habakkuk 1:12-2:20 twice, slowly.

1. At the end of the reading, the reader will say, 'This is the Word of the Lord.'

All to respond, "Thanks be to God." Our response reminds us that this is the Word of the Lord. Just as God had spoken to His people in the past, He is still speaking to us even today, right now."

- a. As God's word was read, which verse speaks to you the most?

- b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "2 Sides"?

- (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a Habakkuk chose to “water his brown patch of grass” by calling upon 6 attributes of God.
- (i) How can learning this from Habakkuk help you keep faith in God despite frustrations and disappointments in your life?
 - (ii) Which of the 6 attributes of God in Habakkuk 1:12 help(s) you to press in on God in this long drawn COVID-19 pandemic or in other difficult situations you may be facing now?
- 2b. How does knowing that Habakkuk was honest and authentic to God about his frustrations and things that were wrong in his life:
- (i) impact how you will relate to God about your frustrations?
 - (ii) help you better cope with frustrations mentally or spiritually?
- 3a. God’s plan will come at His appointed time (Habakkuk 2:3) but we are to continue “watering”, to wait upon Him by looking to Him in faith even if it seems to be slow. Do you find ‘living in faith’(Habakkuk 2:4) while in a frustrating situation:
- (a) easy to achieve or,
 - (b) difficult to achieve and you will do something about it yourself or,
 - (c) difficult to achieve and you will just give up and succumb to depression and disappointment?
- 3b. What is one thing you need to continue doing or change so that you can live by faith, trusting in God’s plan while waiting for His appointed time in frustrating situations?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share how God helped you to continue “watering your brown patch of grass” in faith while in a situation where “the grass is greener on the other side” and His good plan came through for you.

OR

Give thanks to God for being your ROCK - His works are perfect, all His ways are just, He is faithful, He does no wrong and is upright.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for the concerns in 3b and 3c above, committing to support one another to live by faith trusting in God’s plan and perfect timing even in a frustrating situation.

As a group, take time to also brainstorm and seek God’s wisdom on how you can support each other mentally and spiritually in going through frustrating situations.

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