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SERMON TITLE: **What God Has Done in the Past God Can Do**
Today

SCRIPTURE: **Habakkuk 3:1-16**

DATE: **August 29, 2021**

View online service at www.fpcd.org/live-stream

One of the big challenges for the preacher is to take this book filled with ancient texts and unpack it so we can see its relevance for today. The wonderful thing about the Bible is that it is the truth, and the truth is always relevant. Especially when the truth deals with hard times.

Romans 8 tells us that. God “gave up his own Son for us” to a horrific death. That was a very hard time.

But out of that God creates this fabulous future for us. God has overcome hard times with an incredible future through Christ!

This morning as you listen to Habakkuk’s unfolding discovery of how God works in hard times, look for relevance for us today.

Listen for Habakkuk’s attitude toward God. Listen for the answer to these questions:

Who is God?

What has God done?

How does God act?

When does Habakkuk want God to act?

Why should God act that way?

This passage is a prayer, a very strong prayer. How do we pray in times of trouble? How do we ask for God to act in our day? Why do we have the right to ask God to act a certain way? Let’s hear Habakkuk’s words: READ 3:1-16

When Habakkuk said, “I’ve heard of your fame and I stand in awe of your work,” he was talking about the fact that some people have really benefited from the Creator God of heaven and earth.

He recognized that there is a viable record of God’s deeds in history and in the Bible. **This God has all power.**

Moses had experienced it; Isaiah knew of it; Daniel had been a part of it, Joshua depended on it and prayed for it. These encounters were their history with God.

Do you remember your own personal history—long ago or in recent years—things that God has done for you or for a friend or for this church where God “showed out?” The people of the Bible did.

“God really beat that old Egyptian Pharaoh!”

“Remember when God opened that path through the sea?”

“That day there was fire and lightning at Mt. Sinai?”

“My grandpa was there at Jericho when the walls fell. It was crazy!”

“My great-grandma was Rahab and God saved her!”

Habakkuk said, “I am in awe of you LORD!”

To understand that awe is perhaps like seeing your first child. Or maybe it is like standing on a mountaintop in the midst of a storm and then the clouds break and sunbeams stream through.

Recalling those stories is so moving to Habakkuk that he trembles—if God has been like that, perhaps he will do it again! And he blurts out, “In our own time revive it! In our own time make it known!”

Don’t we all desire the same? Don’t we want God to move in our nation too, as Habakkuk desired? What if God can do the same for us?

That would be GREAT MERCY!

It is not unreasonable to want that for our nation! Another prophet named Hosea recorded these words from God:

“Oh, how can I give you up, Israel? How can I let you go? How can I destroy you? . . . My heart is torn within me, and my compassion overflows. No, I will not unleash my fierce anger. I will not completely destroy Israel, for I am God and not a mere mortal. I am the Holy One living among you, and I will not come to destroy. For someday the people will follow me” (11:8-10).

God may allow us to suffer consequences for lack of faith or punishment when we need correction, but God still loves God’s people and will hear us when we ask.

What God has done in the past God can do today! Say that with me.

God has not left us to wander in a desert of life without instruction. Just three months after being freed from Egypt, upon entering the desert of Sinai, God appeared to Israel:

“All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently” (Ex 19:18).

What desert are you in? Do you have a financial struggle that feels like a desert? Or perhaps you have been so isolated this year you are depressed. Or maybe you have lost your spouse or someone you love and it feels like a terrible, barren place without

them. Or your job is oh so frustrating this year and you wonder when it will get better. Or, health issues have cropped up and it makes life hard.

Habakkuk had similar circumstances. He prayed:

"I have heard all about you, LORD. . . . In this time of our deep need, help us again as you did in years gone by."
(v. 3:2)

Habakkuk gives us the right to ask God to do just that for our generation.

Do you need a better financial future, better health, more encouragement, a new friend, someone to love, a better job, or (fill in the blank)? God will not leave you to wander about in your desert alone.

What God has done in the past (say it with me)—God can do today!

Hezekiah continues: "Pestilence marches before him; plague follows close behind." Does that sound like 2021? Plagues are seen in the Bible as means of divine punishment. Perhaps they are. Or, maybe they are simply part of life.

If you are reading your One Year Bible you heard Job complain that God crushed him, shattered his life, angrily tore him apart—for no reason. Sometimes there's no reason for suffering. But with God suffering never happens without mercy.

Job's wife could only see the suffering and said "curse God." But Job had the courage to say, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself, with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!" (19:25-27).

Are you seeking God's mercy, God's redemption in your suffering? And God, after a while restored Job with more than he had before.

What does Habakkuk say? "God, in wrath remember mercy." **God did.** Nothing happens in a believer's life that you cannot freely ask for mercy. It is your right. Why?

BECAUSE GOD IS MERCIFUL.

What Habakkuk remembered about God was that God . . . "Goes out to rescue His chosen people, to save His anointed ones" (v.13).

God's anointed ones are Israel, who bore Christ, and believers, who share Christ.

We belong to God. God has a covenant with us because we believe by faith. That relationship did not stop with the last book of the Bible, it is ours too!

What God has done in the past God can do today!

What vision do you have of God? With these stories in mind, do you also have the courage to ask God to have mercy and act powerfully in our time of need, too?

Would this not be a refreshing vision for God's church today? Let's take the plague, the epidemic, the pandemic, COVID, should we not say:

I don't know if it is a punishment. I don't know if it is an act of Satan. I don't know if the world is suffering for no other reason than these things happen in the world.

So, what if we prayed, "I've heard of your fame Lord, I stand in awe of your deeds. Renew them in our day and in my life. And God, in your wrath remember mercy."

We have a right to expect mercy. Paul said,

"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? . . . No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us."

Remember the power of God in the Bible. Remember all that God has done for you in the past. God is powerful. Remember the acts of God and stand in awe.

Do you want God to act in our generation? Pray for good news. Habakkuk has given you the right to do so, just as he did. It brings God glory to stand on our spiritual history. It gives you courage to believe these things in difficult times.

AMEN