

Title: **The Good News of God's Judgment**
Text: **Habakkuk 2:4-20**
Date: **August 28, 2022**

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Big Idea

Because of Jesus and the cross, God's coming judgment is good news for his people. We can look forward to it as the day of our salvation and the day God will make all the wrong right.

It's my sense that here in America, when it comes time to talk about God's judgment, we often do so a bit reluctantly, with sweaty palms and hushed tones, as if we're a bit embarrassed by it all. And, if we're honest, we sometimes wish we could just strike these parts out of our Bibles, don't we? We wish we could cut and paste and craft a God to our own liking. We appreciate the love and the grace and all, that's wonderful. But the wrath and the fury, no thank you.

So we avoid the subject if we can. But, when we're at last forced to talk of it, we feel as if we need to somehow apologize to the world for what we perceive to be this "mean streak" in God. And that's just it isn't it? God's judgment seems mean to us. It seems unkind, uncharitable, crusty, cranky, rigid. It seems . . . bad.

But I want you to understand something: *God's judgement is good news*. It's not something for us to sheepishly whisper about; it's actually something for us to lift our voices and joyously sing about (cf. Exod. 15; Ps. 68:1-6; Rev. 19:1-3)!

1. The Taunt Song of God's People

If I were to try to sum up the lesson learned in each of the five woes we see in our text, I'd put it like this:

- Woe #1 (vv. 6-8): He who would plunder others now will himself be plundered in the end.
- Woe #2 (vv. 9-11): He who would save his life now will lose it in the end.
- Woe #3 (vv. 12-14): He who would make a name for himself now will be nameless and forgotten in the end.

- Woe #4 (vv. 15-17): He who would shame others now will himself be shamed in the end.
- Woe #5 (vv. 18-20): He who would make idols for himself now will be made like them in the end.

2. The Foul Engine of God's Enemies

It's a bit sobering, when we actually get inside the machinery, when we actually investigate the engine that's driving all of this Babylonian activity, we realize that, in many ways, we're just like them. Looking at v. 5, we see at least two things in play here: (1) emptiness; and (2) arrogance.

We're left with a dilemma: these woes delivered to the Babylonians in our text, if we're not all that different from them at the heart of it, what's to say they're not also for us? How naïve, how ignorant to think that God's coming judgment would mean ultimate salvation for me. It would be my undoing. It's not good news. It's not something to wait for, like Habakkuk here. It's something to run from.

3. The Rugged Cross of God's Son

The only reason the coming judgment of God is good news for us is because Jesus has already taken the punishment we deserved at the cross. It's as the author of Hebrews says: "Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb. 9:28). So are you eagerly waiting for him?!

Reflection Questions

- How do you feel about the idea of God's judgment? Be honest. Have you understood it to be part of the good news of the gospel, or have you felt it to be something else, maybe even something mean, unfair, *bad*?
- After listening to this sermon, do you see now how God's coming judgment relates to our hope for salvation? Why might it be good news for you?
- In what ways do you relate to the Babylonians? How have you personally been driven towards sin by your own emptiness and arrogance? How can Jesus help?

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Our Mission & Values

Mercy Hill Church exists to help restore us to God, neighbor, and city through the good news of Jesus Christ.

FAITH: The Way Back to God | We are redeemed to enjoy intimate relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love

COMMUNITY: The Way Back to Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for

MISSION: The Way the Embassy of Christ, Savior to be his value presses our church *outwards* in love for the

the Bride of Christ, created and relationship with him. This value presses our church *upwards* in love for God.

Neighbor | We are the Family of Christ, adopted in the Beloved relationship with his people. This value presses our church *inwards* in love for one another.

Back to City | We are commissioned by the Holy Spirit to be his ambassadors. This value presses our church *outwards* in love for the unbelieving.

Your Next Steps

When approaching the Christian faith and life, it can be confusing to know where to even begin. Come find us at the Next Steps Table after the service—it would be our joy to help you along in the journey! And if you're a visitor, we have a special gift bag for you. Don't miss it!



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Welcome to Mercy Hill Church.
We are so glad you've joined us today!

Announcement Spotlight

Mercy Hill Men - Upcoming Study!

Men of Mercy Hill, let's get into God's Word together! Beginning Saturday, September 10th, we're planning to start up a study going through chapter 10 of John's gospel. We'll meet every other Saturday at 9:00am at the Walton Residence (319 Fontanelle Dr.). The study will likely be composed of six to eight sessions in total. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us. More info to follow!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Paul Walton at pwwalton@comcast.net.

All Church Hangout - Next Sunday!

Meaningful community is hard to find in Silicon Valley, even in the church. Our congregation is spread out all over the city. But there is one day of every week when we all commit to gather together and worship our God: Sunday. It seems strategic to take this pre-existing momentum and work with it in an attempt to develop deeper community within our body. Therefore, on occasional Sundays throughout the year we will invite the church to enjoy picnic-style afternoons together immediately following the service.

The Plan: After service, bring or buy your lunch and join us at the tables out back for a picnic-style afternoon.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at info@mercyhillchurch.org.

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