



"Take Up the Taunt"

Habakkuk 2:5-20

January 26, 2020

We are going to be in Habakkuk Chapter 2 this morning. Please join me there.

Our approach at Bethel Grace is to open up different books of the Bible and to study through them verse by verse, from beginning to end, to receive what the Lord has to say to us through Scripture. That is what we are spending about five weeks doing in this small book of prophecy in the Old Testament.

This morning we are going to see how some people who were living at wits' end were encouraged to look forward to the day when they would take up the taunt against those who were oppressing them.

As we begin, I have something that I think I need to say and I am only going to say it once, so listen up! You Dodgers fan, just savor this moment. I know that I addressed this in writing already in the church email, but I am going to say it again. I think integrity requires me to say it in person too.

So I will say it, the Los Angeles Dodgers ought to be recognized as the major league baseball world series champions for 2017. There, I said it! I am a die-hard, fervent Angels fan to the point that I like to cheer against the Dodgers. My two favorite teams are the Angels and whoever is playing the Dodgers. I was initially very pleased when the Astros defeated the Dodgers, but it has been revealed that the Astros cheated! This has been all over the headlines and the internet!

The Astros cheated by devising a plan to be able to see the signs that the Dodger catchers were giving to the pitchers. Then the Astros would beat a trashcan to indicate to their batters whether it was going to be a fast ball or an off-speed pitch. So they cheated. They won by cheating. You look through the things that are written about this and listen to the sports casters and to Dodger fans, there is some zeal stirred up in them. They are upset about it.

That is just a small reminder of the longing for justice that lives inside the heart of the human being. Cheaters ought not prosper. Those who are thieves ought not get away with it. Those who do harm to other people for self-elevation, it is not right.

There is something at the heart of the human being that resists these things and says that they ought not happen. When it gets personal and enters your home or when such abuses occur against the people that you love, and when you are walked on top of by people or your friends, it is upsetting. When it is prolonged and keeps happening, it can drive a person to that place that we have been calling wits' end.

As we open this small book of Habakkuk, understand that we have a man of God who was at the end of his wits. He was struggling. He was a man who lived in Old Testament Jerusalem. It would seem that he was a musician in the temple of Jerusalem. He looked at the condition of the city, and at what was filling the streets, and he saw abuses and manipulation taking place everywhere in the city.

These were God's people who were supposed to be loving one another. That was not happening. They were harming one another. They were supposed to be honest with one another, but they were lying to each other. They were supposed to be looking out for one another, but they were manipulating one each other. This was so pervasive.

To give you a recap of where we have been thus far in the prophecy of Habakkuk: as it opens up, Habakkuk was pouring out his heart to the Lord, saying, *Lord, how long is this going to be allowed to endure? Why is this being tolerated? When are you going to intervene and do something?* Habakkuk was at the end of his rope with all that was going on, so he cried out to the Lord about it.

Then the Lord gave His first reply that we read in Chapter 1. The Lord replied to Habakkuk, *I see it. The things that are taking place are evil and wrong. Something is going to be done about it. Behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, aka the Babylonians, and they are going to come in and be my instrument of judgement upon the people that are doing so much sin in the streets of Jerusalem, and the courts of Jerusalem, and the temple of Jerusalem.*

The Lord revealed that to Habakkuk, then Habakkuk came back to the Lord and said, *Wait a minute. That is even worse, because the Babylonians are worse than the Judeans. Shall you use that which is more wicked to swallow up that which is more righteous than itself? At least there are some people in Jerusalem who have some semblance of uprightness, how does that work?*

To which the Lord replied, *I see Babylon and their wickedness too. In the end, they are not going to get away with anything. I will balance the scales of judgment when I see it that they are conquered as well. The time is coming when justice will prevail but in the meantime, the righteous will live by his faith. The righteous shall abide and trust in me to see them through, to keep them lifted up. They will abide with me. They will walk with me and they will trust in me until the vision of justice becomes sight.*

This becomes the great theme of the book of Habakkuk, walking by faith in the Lord when times seems so very dark, trusting in God and resting in Him when life gets so very frustrating, trusting that He is going to cause His goodness to prevail and that He is going to see to it that we are those who preserve through it by trusting in Him.

Understand, the righteous will live by faith. There is the faith that initiates the Christian life, and then there is the faith that sustains the Christian life. The faith that initiates the Christian life is a faith that comes before the Lord, saying, *You are the Living God that has created everything. You are God. I recognize that. While I am created in your image, I'm also fallen in sin. For all the sin that I see around me in this world, it is in me too. I have done harm to others. I have broken your Holy Law. I need a Savior. I need a Redeemer, and that Redeemer's name is Jesus.*

He died on the cross for our sin. He rose on the third day, and we enter into a relationship with God through faith in the One who came to cleanse us and to make us new and to make us right with God by His work on the cross.

That is where it starts but as we continue in Christ, what we find is that this is a fallen world and sometimes life in this world can be very painful and frustrating and we need to draw close to the Lord and have faith in Him in the midst of the things that we are going through, seeking Him to keep us buoyed up.

The Lord wants us to walk by faith. He helps us to have that faith. To see us through the hard times of life in this fallen world, one way that He nurtures faith within the hearts of His people is to give them a vision of the things to come.

When He intervenes into this world and He brings justice and causes uprightness to spread across the earth, He gives us visions of the judgment to come and how His will is going to cover the earth in due time. We look upon those pictures and we walk by faith, looking forward to the things that are yet to come.

As we get into Habakkuk this morning, we are going to have one of those vision. It is a vision of future judgment and justice that is coming upon the abusers and the sinners of this world. What is so interesting is that this portion of Scripture is going to give a picture of judgment, a taunt that is to be taken up by the people who have been downtrodden, those in the Lord who have been walked over.

It is an amazing picture. They will take up this taunt. Let's dig into the Scripture and see how this is portrayed for us as the Lord was speaking through and to Habakkuk in visions this day when this taunt will be taken up.

We left off in Verse 5 last time, but let's look at Habakkuk Chapter 2, starting in Verse 2. In the midst of all the frustration Habakkuk was experiencing, Verse 2:

**2 And the Lord answered me:
 "Write the vision;
 make it plain on tablets,
 so he may run who reads it.
3 For still the vision awaits its appointed time;
 it hastens to the end—it will not lie.
 If it seems slow, wait for it:
 it will surely come; it will not delay.**

Now He will speak of the man of Babylon, the one who intrudes from Babylon:

**4 "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him,
 but the righteous shall live by his faith.
5 "Moreover, wine is a traitor,**

**an arrogant man who is never at rest.
His greed is as wide as Sheol;
like death he has never enough.
He gathers for himself all nations
and collects as his own all peoples.”**
6 **Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing
and riddles for him...**

Verse 5 is a very interesting verse in the Bible. You don't see that kind of statement made all the time.

6 **Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing
and riddles for him...**

The people who have suffered injustice. According to this prophetic picture that is being presented for us, the time is coming when they will take up their taunt against those who have stepped all over them through this life. It is an amazing picture.

We know something about taunts in our culture, especially those of us who have any involvement in the sporting world. If you go to a professional arena where sporting events are taking place. Those who produce the event, they try to stir you up, so you will do a taunt against the opposing team.

Usually this is a song that they blast by the 70s rock band Queen. I wonder how many of you have engaged in this taunt? BANG BANG bang! BANG BANG bang! "We will, we will rock you!" If you are at an NBA game at crunch time and one of the star players of the opposing team fouls out, they might play over the loudspeakers, "Na na na na. Na na na na, hey, hey, hey, hey.... GOOD BYE!"

These are taunts. You know them and have used them. As a father of two boys who are involved in Little League, sometimes I am blown away at some of the taunts that these kids will chant from the dugout against the opposing pitcher. Sometimes I think they need to tone it down, because it can get a little bit harsh.

We must understand here that we are talking about people who have inflicted severe abuses upon others in this world, who have done serious, serious harm. The time is going to come where what goes around, comes around. Those who have heaped abuse will see those they have harmed rise up, and they will have a voice of judgment against them.

Verse 6 says:

6 **Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, with scoffing
and riddles for him...**

My big question is who are *all these*? Who is going to take up the taunt? Does that mean every last person that was ever harmed by Babylon? Are they going to be the ones to take up the taunt?

The answer to that question is no. Remember a great number of these people, especially in Judah, were being judged by God by the use of Babylon because they themselves were being wicked and abusive and ungodly and cruel. They were sinning against other people.

What we find as we go through this portion of Scripture is that it speaks of the remnant of the peoples. From each nation taken by Babylon, it is prophesized that there would be a remnant, a smaller portion set apart from the rest.

If you study the pages of Scripture, that language of *the remnant* takes on very important significance. It speaks of those who are distinct and set apart, those made sensitive to the things of the Lord, those humbled in the sight of the Lord, those who have faith in God for the forgiveness of their own sin.

What you find is that the remnant of God is often found in surprising places. Here what we find is that these people of God are going to be found among all those nations that have been conquered by Babylon. God will have His people among them and they will take up the taunt.

The next question is: when will it happen? Is this something that took place historically or is this something that awaits a future fulfillment? Like all prophetic literature of Scripture, there is a sense in which what we have written for us here has one foot in historical context, and another foot in the end times, the end of days.

Yes, there was a sense when many of these people who experienced the pain inflicted by Babylon, the time came when Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire came and conquered Babylon. It was a time of victory for them. And, yes, they may have been taking up the taunt at that time.

However, I think that this looks forward to its greatest fulfillment at the end of the age, when Jesus Christ returns; when He gathers His people to Himself. He will bring them to share in His victory over all of the sin of the earth.

What we find is that there is Old Testament Babylon, that nation that was led by Nebuchadnezzar and others. What we find when we read in the pages of New Testament literature that speaks of the end of time on this earth is that there will be a spiritual Babylon that shares in all these same characteristics of that Old Testament evil nation. God's people will be giving the victory. They will share in the judgement over the world system that opposes God and His ways.

So as we go forward, we are going to read through what is here in Chapter 2. What we are going to find is that there are five taunts that are spoken of by the people of God over those who have not repented and trusted in the Lord through Christ.

As we look through these taunts, there are some really serious issues that are laid out before us, things that really stir the heart of the person who is seeking to walk in the ways of the Lord. But we must understand that we do not jump the gun. We are not to start taunting the people that frustrate us here and now. Don't get ahead of yourself.

Remember the teaching of our Messiah. Remember the teaching of the Lord that we are to love our enemies. While we are living in this age, and while there is an opportunity for people to repent and turn to the Lord for forgiveness of sin, the heart that we are to share with the Lord is to spread the Gospel and pointing people to Jesus that they might turn to Him in repentance and faith and be saved.

However, for all of those who do not repent, the time is coming when the scales of judgement will be balanced. What goes around, comes around and we see it portrayed for us in the portion of Scripture that is ahead of us.

We are going to see five taunts that are laid out for us here in this portion of Scripture. Five taunts for Babylon. In Chapter 2 and Verses 6 through 8 we see:

1. A Taunt Against Plundering (2:6-8)

6 **“Woe to him who heaps up what is not his own—
 for how long?—
 and loads himself with pledges!”**
7 **Will not your debtors suddenly arise,
 and those awake who will make you tremble?
 Then you will be spoil for them.**
8 **Because you have plundered many nations,
 all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you,
 for the blood of man and violence to the earth,
 to cities and all who dwell in them.**

In other words, there is a great turnaround to come. What we have pictured for us in those verses is Babylon personified and he is a man who has gathered all of this wealth and plunder and it is like he is sitting on a pile of gold, counting his gold coins and enjoying everything that he has—all the things that he has taken wrongfully from others.

Then in this vision that we have here, those who have been harmed rise up against him, and he looks at all of them and says, *I thought you were dead*. They say, *We are not dead*. And they take up the taunt as this person who has done so much harm is now removed from his perch and brought to justice.

That is what is laid out before us here in this text. This is a taunt against plundering and hoarding things that don't belong to us. What we see next is that there is:

2. A Taunt Against Evil Gain (2:9-11)

Let's read about this as we look at what it says in Verses 9 through 11:

9 **"Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house,
 to set his nest on high,
 to be safe from the reach of harm!**
10 **You have devised shame for your house
 by cutting off many peoples;
 you have forfeited your life.**
11 **For the stone will cry from the wall,
 and the beam from the woodwork respond.**

We see in this text a person who wanted to get a secure life for himself. The irony is that in order to get their security, they go out and they do damage to other people. They get their lofty perch, their nest, by evil gain, by taking the things that belong to other people. That is what is laid out before us here.

Evil gain is any way of accruing wealth that involves hurting or harming other people. That is evil. It is thievery and it is wrong, and it takes place all throughout the earth, every single day. I don't know if there is a day that goes by without a person taking a gun or knife or some kind of weapon and threatening somebody else with it, so that they could take what belongs to them.

What might even be more frustrating and something that will really takes you to wits' end is when you have somebody who comes and slithers their way in and manipulates to take advantage of the young or the old or the uninformed or the naïve. They come in so friendly, yet they steal through trickery that which belongs to other people.

That is dishonest gain and there is a word that is used for it here in this portion of Scripture. It is evil. It is wrong. It is a sin to steal from other people. When you see it happening before your eyes it can drive you to wits' end. Habakkuk saw it happening and the Lord said, *I see it happening too, and in the end justice will be served.*

Brothers and sisters, it is okay to want to have a secure living environment. Do you have locks on your doors? That is okay. I go walking through the streets at night with Lydie-Lou and I find all these security lights flashing on. That's okay.

But what we have depicted here is somebody building a luxurious compound for themselves by doing harm to other people. That is sinful. That is wrong. They do it out of a thirst for wealth. Brothers and sisters, understand, it is okay to desire to build wealth. Read the book of Proverbs, where the little ant is set before us as an example of industry and hard work.

It is okay to gather resources to take care of your family. However, understand this: don't steal to do it. You work to do it. God has given you the ability to work with your hands. He has given you a mind with which to think and to strategize. He has given you creativity. He has given you the ability to gather resources to take care of your own and to be generous to His purposes on this earth.

Those are good things, but when people step all over other people for their own selfish gain, that is evil and there is a time of accountability that is coming. That is what is depicted for us here in this text.

There is a taunt against plundering. Then there is a taunt against evil gain. Those two are very similar. There is a third taunt that is laid out before us as well. We continue and we see:

3. A Taunt Against Violent Initiatives (2:12-14)

This is having ambitions in life and, once again, being willing to hurt others to carry out your vision. We see that as we continue into Verses 12 through 14:

12 **”Woe to him who builds a town with blood
 and founds a city on iniquity!**
13 **Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts
 that peoples labor merely for fire,
 and nations weary themselves for nothing?**
14 **For the earth will be filled
 with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
 as the waters cover the sea.**

The thrust of this portion is in Verse 12:

12 **”Woe to him who builds a town with blood
 and founds a city on iniquity!**

Here the spirit of Babylon is portrayed as a young ambitious man who wants to build a town. He wants to be the founder of a city. Picture a young man who decides that he is going to build a place called Saltzmannville, something like that! He wants to do something to gather a name for himself.

So this very young forty-six-year old man is working so hard and diligently that people might know his name and along the way, he finds that certain moral compromises become necessary. Then he continues to find out that people disagree with his ideas, and there are voices that dissent against his vision. And in his arrogance and in his pride, he begins dismissing, terminating, and firing people.

It can even come to the point where he sheds blood to get rid of people that stand in his way. Pray to the Lord that there is never a place called Saltzmannville, that is built like that! Yet, you look even into a great number of governing authorities and there is a trail of that left behind.

It is going to catch up to them. There is a time of reckoning that is coming. All of this labor and effort and the things we are talking about here in this vision, in the end it will amount to them as nothing. It will build up as that which was totally vain and empty.

When the ages of time has passed and the winds of change have blown, such cities will be dust and all the sinful works to build that city will be fuel for the judgement. This is what is laid out for us here in this text.

Those of us who are in Christ, those of us who are following Christ, we need to pray for the vision of I Corinthians 10:31 to be carried out in our lives. Whatever you do, do it unto the glory of the Lord; that His ways may be made known. We bring the ambitions we have to the Lord that people might know His goodness and His power and His grace working through us.

We could take good old Tim Tebow as an example. He might not have gone very far in the NFL, but that man was probably the most inspirational college athlete; one of the top of all time. That man was incredible.

Whenever attention was being brought to him, he would say, Yes, but I want you to know that it is God who has equipped me for this. It is the Lord who has empowered me for this. It is God who has provided me with this, and I want to give all glory to the Lord, who helps me to be strong and carry out His vision for my life.

Here we have this taunt against violent initiatives that is laid out here in this text. We need to pray that the Spirit would work in us, so that we could be just the opposite, doing all our deeds for the glory of God and for the good of the people who are around us.

We continue with another taunt. These are all hard to talk about, by the way. I understand that this is a judgement sermon and that is a good thing, because there is evil in the world that needs to be spoken against, but these are not easy topics to talk about.

The next one might be the hardest of them all. There is:

4. A Taunt Against Obscenity (2:15-17)

Look at what it says in Verses 15 through 17:

- 15 **Woe to him who makes his neighbors drink—
you pour out your wrath and make them drunk,
in order to gaze at their nakedness!**
- 16 **You will have your fill of shame instead of glory.
Drink, yourself, and show your uncircumcision!
The cup in the LORD's right hand
will come around to you,
and utter shame will come upon your glory!**
- 17 **The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
as will the destruction of the beasts that terrified them,
for the blood of man and violence to the earth,
to cities and all who dwell in them.**

In those verses we have the deepest of insult being added to the harshest of injury. You study about the deeds of the Babylonians and what you find is that it was not enough for them to conquer people. They had to utterly humiliate them too.

They found it amusing to close in on a city and conquer it. Then they would trap its dignitaries and royal family members. They would force feed them with alcohol. They would get these people inebriated out of their minds, so that they were slurring in their speech and stumbling around. Then these people would be disrobed and humiliated. This was the total abasing of the human being. It is something that incenses the heart of God when these things take place.

Brothers and sisters, in the world that we live in we ought to be horrified by the black market that exists for certain things in this world. There are people who kidnap other people for the sake of torture and for heaping abuse and humiliation upon them while others watch it. Some people watch live in person, others watch on screens.

This is global. Hitler did it with his mad scientist doctors. Mobsters do this. Animistic tribes do this. Religious cults do this. I'm sure that you can find that even suburban Californians do this. It is stunning what people have appetites for. Can I just humbly or vehemently say that it is sick and it wrong and it is everywhere.

In response to those who carry out these things, God has a cup of His own. That cup of judgement is going to come down upon them and there is going to be a hotter place in Hell for those who practice such abuses. Understand that. That is what is being depicted for us here in this text.

Kristy was talking to one of the moms on one of our sons teams. She works with those who are social workers. She was expressing how utterly demoralizing and infuriating it is to see how much trafficking and kidnapping for such purposes takes place here in our own backyard. It is all around us, friends.

Pray that there would be repentance, that they would see the evil that they are doing and that they would fall on their knees before Jesus to made new. Pray that not only governing authorities, but local churches would rise up to help people caught in the midst of such atrocities, because it is happening all around us.

Brothers and sisters, we need to be careful because the spirit of Babylon is pervasive around us as well. These things happen incrementally in the lives of people. One ungodly and sinful appetite is nourished and it does violence to the soul. The heart is hardened and it just keeps getting worse and worse.

We need to be so careful about what we expose ourselves to and what we take in through the eye and ear gates, that our hearts are not made numb to that which is truly wicked. Pray for absolute repentance from pornography. It is has been normalized in our society, and it is voyeurism and it is absolute abuse of the gift of sexual intimacy that God designed for a husband and wife.

This is available everywhere. It is a struggle here. It is a struggle in churches. The temptation is real. Pray that the Lord would give us all eyes to see that it is wrong and it is toxic to the soul. If that is something you are struggling with, pray to the Lord, *Create in me a pure heart. Renew my desires, so that I won't be taken off by that which is toxic.*

Tell somebody about it. We all have desires for things that we ought not have desires for, every single last one of us. These desires lose their power when they are brought into the light; when one person says to another, *Hey, I am struggling in this area and I need prayer.*

When you bring it into the light, it loses its power. We as the church, we are to be a community where we can share these things with one another and find strength and love in each other, and sometimes words of reproof from one another—all in a spirit of grace, so that we won't be led away by the deceitfulness of sin.

We are living in a day when obscenity is everywhere and the American people are just getting used to it. It is the spirit of Babylon, men and women, boys and girls. Understand this. What are we entertaining ourselves with? There are some forms of humor that are so crass that it is even beyond belief.

There are some forms of entertainment that are just so violent and gory, like cannibalism put on the screen, and millions and millions of dollars are spent by people to watch it. It is that which wages war against the soul. It is not good.

Brothers and sisters, if you are taking any of this in and while you are, the Holy Spirit is not screaming out against it, get back into the presence of the Lord because there is a numbness of soul that is happening. We need to say, *Lord, make my heart tender toward that which is evil.*

I say these things humbly. No temptation has overcome you except that which is common to man. I stand up before you as a person who knows what it is to struggle with temptations to sin. We have these desires within us and we must understand that some of these impulses that we have, they are no good.

When we see what happened here with Babylon, in this black market for such forms of self-gratification, we see what happens when such things go unchecked. We need to say, *Lord, I am sinner who needs to be cleansed and I pray that you would purify my heart. I pray that you would help me to be surrounded by people who can encourage in this.*

In the end obscenity is doing so much damage and it is going to be judged, and rightfully so. We continue to see one last taunt that is here:

5. A Taunt Against Idolatry (2:18-20)

Against the worship of false gods. Verse 18:

**18 What profit is an idol
 when its maker has shaped it,**

**a metal image, a teacher of lies?
For its maker trusts in his creation
when he makes speechless idols!**
19 **Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, Awake;
to a silent stone, Arise!
Can this teach?
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
and there is no breath at all in it.**
20 **But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.”**

Once again, this practice of idolatry is spoken of and against in the pages of Scripture. This is the worship of false gods.

What you find when you look around the face of the earth is that the human condition is incurably religious. Everywhere you look there are people worshiping something. The testimony of Scripture is that it is an earth filled with false deities, false gods.

The Word of God is clear. In this pluralistic age that we live in, you can either receive it or reject it, believe it or not. But there is one God and one God alone; the Living God who has revealed Himself in the pages of Scripture; the Living God who revealed Himself to Israel in the Old Testament and through Israel desired to make Himself known to the nations of the earth.

He is the same God who has made Himself known to the church of Jesus Christ. And who through the church of Jesus Christ, intends to make Himself known to all of the people, nations, and tribes of the earth, that the earth may see the Lord in His Holy Temple, and that all the earth may keep silence before Him it says. He is the one God. He is the one that is to be worshiped.

We began the year 2020 with a vision that was given to the prophet Isaiah. I wonder if you remember it. It corresponds exactly to what we have written here in Verse 20:

20 **But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.”**

The prophet Isaiah in Chapter 6, gave testimony about how he, in year that King Uzziah died, saw the Lord. He was taken into the presence of the Living God. He said in Isaiah 6:1:

¹In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of his robe filled the temple.

It was this display of divine splendor that was awesome. There above the throne of the Living God, Isaiah saw angelic beings and they were crying out to one another, *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!*

As Isaiah saw and heard all this, he began trembling with reverence and fear. It was an awesome picture that entered into his heart, and shook him to the core.

What is so interesting is that here in this text in Habakkuk Chapter 5, there are these five words of woe that are rightly spoken outward. Woe to him, five times in a row in this chapter.

When Isaiah, the man of God, was taken before this display of the holiness of God, suddenly he was saying, *Woe is me. Woe is me, for I am ruined.* This sense of the holiness and the light and the radiance of God made it so powerfully known to him that he himself was a sinner. Isaiah said, *Woe is me, for I am ruined. I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips.*

This prophet was undone in the presence of the Lord. There is the display of the righteousness of God, but, praise God, there is also the movement of His mercy and His grace and His love for contrite people, who come to the realization that they are sinners in need of grace.

For at that very moment, one of those angels approached Isaiah with one of the coals from the fire from the alter of incense, touched the coal to his lips and said, *Behold, your sin is taken away.*

In Verse 20 we are told:

**²⁰ But the LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth keep silence before him.”**

There is a sense in which we ought to be silent before the Lord, because if we just had a glimpse, the slightest understanding, of how awesome and powerful He is, how pristine He is in His purity, we would have silent reverence in His sight.

Even as we come to that awareness of the fact that He is holy and we are fallen in sin, there is the sense in which we ought to be silent before Him. We ought not speak. Understand, brothers and sisters, there is an additional sense in which we need not speak.

For those who have come to understand that they too are cut from the same fabric of the people who have committed all these woes and atrocities, for the one who humbles himself before the Lord and saying they are a sinner in need of grace, understand that there is One who speaks for you in your defense.

There is One who advocates for you as one who has come under the shelter and the cleansing of His grace. For the one who says they are a sinner in need of grace and looks to Jesus, they have a Defense Lawyer before the Father in Heaven.

They need not speak. I John 1:8 – 2:2

⁸If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from

all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

²He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus is the one who washes us clean. Jesus is the one who robes us in righteousness. He is the one who qualifies us for the light and radiance of heaven by adorning us in His goodness. He is the one who advocates for us before the Father when our sin is revealed because He is the one who came and made an end to our sin by paying for them on the cross.

This is the good news. This is the good news of Jesus Christ. This is the epicenter of biblical revelation; that sinners are saved in Jesus Christ. While we are living in a world that is filled with horrible things, we, church, are to be those who rejoice in Christ.

When we understand the forgiveness that He has brought to us, suddenly the silent voice bursts forth in praise to the Lord, but let the silent voices also commend to the people around them, that there is One who saves sinners. There is One who transforms them. There is One who makes them new. His name is Jesus and He is the rescue that God has sent into this world.

Sometimes the preacher feels the gravity of what he has preached. I stand up before you humbly, understand that. I just pray that by the Holy Spirit these words have resonated as true, not because they came from me but they came through me from the Word of the Lord to speak truth to this generation, because I want to assure you that the man standing before is need of the grace of Jesus Christ every bit as much as anybody else in this world.

I praise Him that He is my Savior and that He is my Lord. I pray that we would all take shelter in Him and that we would commend Him to others. Let's pray.