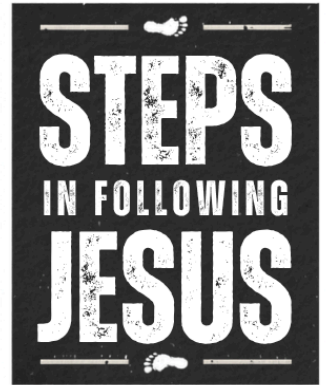


THE BOOK OF JOEL

REPENT: STARVE THE FLESH, FEED THE SOUL | JOEL 2:1-17

Memory Verse: "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

Joel 2:12-13



The locust plague from chapter 1 was a divine wake-up call using a physical judgment to expose a spiritual need. Repentance is not simply feeling sorry for sin, but rather a turning away from sin and turning back to God.

1. Recognizes God's Warning

- The trumpet was used to get the attention of God's people. (Joel 2:1)
- God warns His people so they can repent/be restored rather than punished (Ezekiel 33:7-9)
- The Day of the LORD cannot be avoided and it will be complete (Joel 2:11)
- During the Scottish Reformation, John Knox preached a warning against spiritual compromise and revival broke out!

2. Requires Whole Heart Trusting (Joel 2:12-13)

- God is not interested in outward demonstrations, He wants YOU to return to HIM! (Psalm 51:17 and Matthew 15:8)
- Martin Luther's first of his ninety-five theses states: When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, Repent, He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance. (Joel 2:13b)
- God desires to show mercy! When we repent, God relents the judgment! (Luke 15:20)

3. Intercession for Restoration (Joel 2:17)

- Repentance often comes because others are praying for you...even Jesus! (Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:26)
- Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul, and Peter all preached repentance (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Romans 5:8)
- The God who warns is the God who welcomes: He's waiting for YOU

Top 3: Baptisms + Cookout at VMC on August 9th, Get Connected (Growth Track + Life Groups), Three Services Begin on September 13th (8:30AM, 10AM, 11:30AM)

Reflect + Respond:

1. Read Joel 2:1-2; Ezekiel 33:7-9; Amos 4:12; Hebrews 12:5-11. Why does God sound an alarm before judgment? What warnings does God give individuals and churches today? How can we distinguish between God's loving discipline from mere difficult circumstances? Identify one area where God may be warning you to change direction before greater consequences occur?
2. Read Joel 2:13; Psalm 51:17; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 15:8-9; Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:8-13; Luke 15:20-24. What does it mean to "rend your heart and not your garments"? Why is it possible to appear spiritual externally while remaining unchanged internally? What are some things you do that are not consistent between your external and internal spiritual state? How does understanding God's grace encourage believers to return after failure?
3. Read Joel 2:15-16; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Acts 2:37-42. Why is corporate repentance important? What role does repentance play in church renewal and revival? How can you help cultivate a culture of prayer, humility, and repentance within your church?
4. Read Joel 2:17; Daniel 9:3-19; Nehemiah 1:4-11; Hebrews 7:25. What is the connection between repentance and intercession? Why do repentant people often become people of prayer for others? List three people or situations for which God may be calling you to intercede regularly? What would happen if God's people interceded rather than interfered?
5. Joel's name means *Yahweh is God*. How does repentance reveal a person's understanding of this meaning? If Yahweh is God...my God...then why should I struggle to starve my flesh and feed my spirit? Read Joel 2:15-16. Why is it important to share publicly in repentance and intercession? How does your relationship with God impact others?

Our prayer for you: Merciful Father, we hear Your call to return to You with all our hearts. Forgive us for our sins, our complacency, and our divided loyalties. Create within us true repentance that goes beyond outward religion and reaches the depths of our hearts. Teach us to trust Your grace, seek Your face, and intercede for others. Through Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for our salvation, bring renewal to our lives, our churches, and our communities. In His name we pray, Amen.