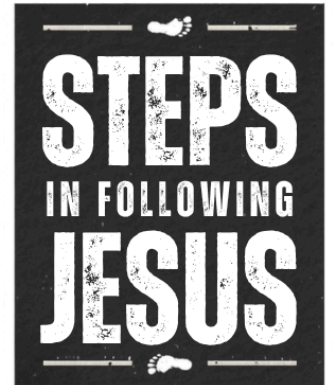


# THE BOOK OF JOEL

## LAMENT: GETTING REAL WITH GOD | JOEL 1

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



- **Lament-** a passionate expression of grief, sorrow or deep regret.
- Israel has returned home from forty years in captivity, but they needed to be reminded of what it means to walk with God. Release from captivity does not mean release from its effect!
- We distract ourselves from pain, explain away suffering, or seek immediate solutions. Yet Scripture teaches that lament is a God-ordained response to loss, judgment, sin, and spiritual decline.
- Joel's message is not simply about agricultural disaster; it is about spiritual awakening.

### 1. Lament Recognizes Reality

- a. Many people never return to God because they refuse to acknowledge their true condition.
- b. Joel 1:2-4, Psalm 51:3

### 2. Lament Recognizes Sin's Destruction

- a. The reason for the change is necessary for lasting change
- b. Joel 1:8-9, 2 Corinthians 7:10
- c. Before his conversion, Augustine pursued worldly pleasures and intellectual pride. In his *Confessions*, he describes deep grief over his sinful condition. His lament became the doorway through which God brought him to repentance and faith. Augustine's tears were not signs of weakness but evidence of a heart awakening to God.

### 3. Lament Recognizes the Necessity of God's Presence

- a. The Biblical response to crisis is NOT isolation but a corporate seeking of God!
- b. Joel 1:13-15, Hebrews 10:24-25

### 4. Lament Recognizes Complete Dependence on God

- a. Lament is not merely expressing pain but bringing pain to God. Pain without Presence equals Self-Inflicted Punishment...of which, there is NO escape!
- b. Joel 1:19-20, Hebrews 4:16

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)

- During seasons of plague, political turmoil, and personal hardship, Martin Luther repeatedly turned to prayer and Scripture. His lament was not hopelessness but dependence upon God's sovereignty and grace.
- Lament begins with honest recognition of reality, mourns what sin has destroyed, recognizes God's judgment, and cries out to God.
- Lament is the first step to restoration.
- What have you been avoiding that is causing you pain? Are you ready to take the first step in restoration to your Father?

## Reflect + Respond:

1. Read Joel 1:2-4; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 78:1-8; Revelation 2:4-5. Why does Joel begin by calling people to hear and remember devastation? How does remembering God's discipline help future generations remain faithful? What dangers arise when believers ignore spiritual decline? Identify one area of your spiritual life where God may be calling you to honestly evaluate your condition.
2. Read Joel 1:9-12; Psalm 51:17; 2 Corinthians 7:10; James 4:8-10. What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? How can sorrow become a tool that draws us closer to God rather than further away? Describe a time when conviction led you toward repentance?
3. Read Joel 1:13-14; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Acts 1:14; Hebrews 10:24-25. Why does Joel emphasize fasting, prayer, and corporate worship? What role does the local church play in seasons of spiritual renewal? What practical step can you take to strengthen your participation in corporate prayer and worship?
4. Read Joel 1:15; Matthew 24:42-44; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Titus 2:11-13. How should the reality of the Day of the LORD shape our lives? Why do many believers struggle to live with an eternal perspective and how does that affect their daily lives? What priorities need to change if you lived each day in anticipation of Christ's return?
5. Read Joel 1:19-20; Psalm 13; Romans 8:26; Hebrews 4:16; I Peter 5:7. What does Joel teach us about bringing our pain to God? How is biblical lament different from complaining or despair? What burden, grief, struggle do you need to bring honestly before the LORD in prayer today?

A prayer for you from us: Father, we confess that we often ignore our spiritual condition and resist the discipline that calls us back to You. Teach us to lament biblically, to grieve over sin, and to seek Your face with humble hearts. Through the work of Christ, draw us back into deeper fellowship with You. May our sorrow lead to repentance, our repentance lead to renewal, and our renewal lead to faithful obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen