

Introduction:

- Joel 2:12-17 The Call to Intercession a Biblical Response to Crisis
- Joel 2:1 begins with a “sound the alarm” or sound the trumpet because the day of the Lord is upon us! This is a tragedy in the making. 2:15 is a “sound the trumpet”. What I see in that is God’s desire to bless and not curse. I also see this great gift that God has given called free will, with which we can respond to Him.
 - That free will means we have the ability to make choices that shape outcomes.
 - Our choices for righteousness or for sin will bring either blessing or evil to us and to those near us.
 - Our free will provides the legal entry point for both angels and demons to be much more active in the natural realm. When we live in righteousness, we open up legal access for angelic activity into the natural realm. When people live in sin, they open up legal entry points for demonic activity to be heightened.

I. God Governs Through Us

- A. God governs the universe in partnership with His people through intercessory prayer. Jesus is the perfect picture of a man stepping into the position of intercession for others.
1. *“... He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.”* (Hebrews 7:25, NLT)
 2. *“Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the whole earth as your possession.”* (Psalm 2:8, NLT)
 3. God has chosen to release His power through His people’s prayers. The Bible is a continuous story of the picture of praying people making a difference in the earth.
 4. He opens doors of blessing and closes door of oppression in response to our prayers.
 5. God is waiting for our persistent in prayer before Him. Isaiah taught that God longs to release grace and power, but he waits for our cry. *“So the Lord must wait for you to come to him so he can show you his love and compassion. For the Lord is a faithful God. Blessed are those who wait for his help. O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He will be gracious if you ask for help. He will surely respond to the sound of your cries.”* (Isaiah 30:18-19, NLT)
 6. We saw in Ezk. 22:30 God looked for intercessor but found none... He destroyed Israel.
 7. Ex 32:9-14 Moses stood in the gap and God relented from harming Israel.
- B. God’s call for solemn assemblies - this is what is happening in Joel 2:12-17. Everyone drop everything now and pray. It is an invitation to work with God in turning back evil.
1. It is corporate in that it involves everyone...even the children because should Babylon invade the children will be affected.
 2. It is intercessory in that we stand in the gap and pray back to God the things he has already promised.
 3. It is worship because worship can sustain long periods of prayer.
 4. In Joel 2:12-17 God tells us what to do to receive His mercy and deliverance.
 - a) Turn to Him wholeheartedly with...
 - (1) Fasting
 - (2) weeping and mourning...(travail)

- (3) God wants our hearts and our love Mt 22:37. He wants us to respond to His love by loving Him.
- b) Rending of heart not clothes. God seeks a tearing of our heart away from things that hold our disobedience. This is a radical dealing with our own hearts before God. To rend means to tear violently. IE. Mt 5:29 "If your eye causes you to sin pluck it out!" One cannot be casual in the place of wholeheartedness.
- c) Return to God.
- C. The place of safety in the time of judgement is with company of people living in longterm wholeheartedness to God.

II. Repent with Confidence

- A. Five reasons to trust Him. *"... Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish."* (Joel 2:13, NLT)
 - 1. He is merciful, gracious
 - a) Ps 103:10 He has not dealt...not punished us according to our iniquities.
 - 2. He is compassionate, merciful
 - a) Mic 7:18 Who is like you pardoning iniquity...because He delights in mercy.
 - 3. He is slow to anger
 - a) Ezk. 33:11 I have not pleasure in the death of the wicked.
 - b) 2 Peter 3:9 It is God's that none would perish.
 - 4. He is filled with love
 - a) Ro 2:4 His goodness...leads to repentance.
 - 5. He relents from doing harm
- B. God Relents From Judgement/to cancel the decree of judgement.
 - 1. *"Gather together... before judgment begins, before your time to repent is blown away like chaff. Act now, before the fierce fury of the Lord falls and the terrible day of the Lord's anger begins. Seek the Lord, all who are humble, and follow his commands. Seek to do what is right and to live humbly. Perhaps even yet the Lord will protect you— protect you from his anger on that day of destruction."* (Zephaniah 2:1-3, NLT) I like that! "PERHAPS"
 - 2. In response to our prayer, God changes what He releases in a nation or in our personal lives.
 - 3. Great example is Abraham asking God to spare Lot. Ie. 50, 45,40,30,20,10. Gen 18:22-33.
 - 4. *"Who knows? Perhaps he will give you a reprieve, sending you a blessing instead of this curse. Perhaps you will be able to offer grain and wine to the Lord your God as before."* (Joel 2:14, NLT) God desires to turn from judgment to leave a blessing. He would rather have a revival zone than a disaster zone!
 - 5. David knew God this way. IE. After Nathan announced judgement David fasted and prayed. 2 Sam 12:16-22 *"Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live."*

III. Gather the People Joel 2:15-16

- A. How should we respond when we see impending crisis?
1. Consecrate a fast - fasting positions the heart to experience the grace of God in greater ways.
 2. Call a sacred assembly - 'set apart' is what makes it sacred. Dedicated to God.
 3. Gather the people - this is not just for ministers and staff.
 4. Sanctify the congregation - clear the schedule! This is important.
 5. Assemble the elders
 6. Gather children and nursing babies. No one will be exempt from the judgement therefore no one is exempt from the sacred assembly.
- B. Call to the priests. *"Let the priests, who minister in the Lord's presence, stand and weep between the entry room to the Temple and the altar. Let them pray, "Spare your people, Lord! Don't let your special possession become an object of mockery. Don't let them become a joke for unbelieving foreigners who say, 'Has the God of Israel left them?' "" (Joel 2:17, NLT) Two prayers they are called to pray:*
1. Spare your people Lord. A prayer to stop the judgment all together.
 2. Do not give your special possession be given as a reproach.
- C. The central idea so Joel 2:12-17 is that God wants to deliver His people! He desire to show compassion and release His power. Therefore He has given us clear instruction.