
Victorious Living
A Call to Prayer
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The Well Church of Lewisville

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Joel 1:1-14 & Joel 2:18-27, 32

Overview

We live in times where there are significant challenges facing us. Not just challenges in our personal lives, but in our cities, our country, and around the world. The many crisis's that are happening, although many seem so distant, have a direct impact on our lives.

Here are just a few examples:

1. **The Fiscal Cliff** and the results of the decisions being made by congress can and will affect each of us. Some more than others.
2. **The school shootings that took place in Connecticut** affects our lives. It is driving changes to school policies of the schools our own children attend. The event has caused fear and anxiety for many parents, administrators, and teachers.
3. **The war in Iraq.** The people we each know who are serving along with the threats of terrorists upon our country have an impact on our lives.

The world has seen troubles like these in the past. In fact, during the reign of the Roman Empire, the world experienced similar, and what I would consider even worse chaos than what we might be seeing today.

We can learn through history as well as through God's Word how we can live victoriously and purposefully even in a world plagued with famine and chaos. God's sovereignty has not changed. He is still in control now just as he has been from the very beginning. God did not just create the world, then disappear. He loves His creation just as much now as He did when he created it.

Scripture

Joel 1:1-14 NIV

Joel 2:18-27, 32 NIV

Key Points

1. Israel was laid waste to a swarm of locusts.

- a. So what's the big deal? They had a grasshopper manifestation, right?

About Locusts

When environmental conditions produce many green plants and promote breeding, locusts can congregate into thick, mobile, ravenous swarms.

Locust swarms devastate crops and cause major agricultural damage and attendant human misery—famine and starvation.

The desert locust is notorious. Found in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, they inhabit some 60 countries and can cover one-fifth of Earth's land surface. Desert locust plagues may threaten the economic livelihood of one-tenth of the world's humans.

A desert locust swarm can be 460 square miles in size and pack between 40 and 80 million locusts into less than half a square mile.

Each locust can eat its weight in plants each day, so a swarm of such size would eat 423 million pounds of plants every day.



Locust Infestation

- b. Israel was hit harder than ever before.
- c. Their livelihood was completely laid to waste.
 - i. Not only were their plants wiped out, but also such devastation wipes out their livestock, including their offerings to God for their sins.
- d. We are experiencing very real challenges as a nation. The things happening in our nation, and around the world, have affects on us.
- e. Although we are not being attacked by plagues of locusts, there are other major events taking place.
- f. Have we, as a nation, ever experienced some of what we are experiencing today?
 - i. What are we facing today, that not even our parents faced in the past?
 - 1. School Shootings
 - 2. Terrorist attacks on American Soil
 - 3. Constitutional Rights being slowly stripped away.
 - 4. Talks of Marshall Law

2. Verse 2: - Church leaders and the church, pay attention!

- a. Joel is telling everyone, especially the elders and priests, it is time to draw near to the Lord.
- b. Wake up!
- c. You have nothing! Not even a drink offering for the Lord.
- d. Now is the time to turn back to the LORD!

3. Verse 3 – This is the Word of the Lord telling those who are parents to educate your children.

- a. Make sure your children understand God's plan for them.
- b. Make sure they know when miracles take place, when God's blessing flows and how to pray.
- c. "but let them tell it to teach their children to stand in awe of God and of his judgments, and to tremble before him." Note: We ought to transmit to posterity the memorial of God's judgments as well as of his mercies.

4. V4 - 7 Judah was going through a terrible famine! This was their main source of food, trade, and a way of living, all destroyed.

- a. Famines we are facing today –
 - i. Fiscal Cliff, Unemployment, Poverty, Natural Disasters,
- b. The Lord's blessing seems to be missing

5. V8 – 12 Everyone is grieving this terrible situation.

- a. The things they once took delight in are now gone.
- b. Is anyone in this situation today? Have you lost things you once took delight in?
- c. Have you been walking daily with the Lord?

6. V13 – Joel tells the people there is a solution to this.

- a. Humble yourself before the Lord
- b. Fast
- c. Cry out in Prayer
- d. Draw Near to God

7. V2:18 – The Lord took Pity

- a. The Lord responds to our prayers, especially sincere humble prayers.
- b. He is a compassionate God.

- c. **Psalm 86:5** says: ***You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.***
- d. **Psalm 120:1** - ***I call on the LORD in my distress, and he answers me.***

8. V2:19-26 The Lord not only provided, be provided enough to satisfy FULLY!

- a. Israel went from wailing to rejoicing!
- b. The Lord heard the humble, repentant hearts of Israel and he responded with blessings!

Hosea 14:1-2 NIV

Return, Israel, to the Lord your God.

Your sins have been your downfall!

2 Take words with you

and return to the Lord.

Say to him:

“Forgive all our sins

and receive us graciously,

that we may offer the fruit of our lips.

- c. When we are in a famine, we must ask ourselves, have we been walking with the Lord?

9. V27 The LORD desires to be known.

- a. He makes himself known. He uses the weak things to shame the strong.
- b. A single, non-threatening insect, the size of a paperclip, can cause very little damage.
- c. The Lord used this tiny, harmless insect, by swarming them together to wipe out Israel’s livelihood.
- d. God’s might was shown in the weakest of things.

10. Israel repented, humbled themselves, fasted and cried out in prayer

- a. When we are going through famines in our personal life, when our country is being attacked, how do you respond?
 - i. Humble ourselves
 - ii. Fast
 - iii. Cry out in prayer

Conclusion

No matter what is going on in our lives, in our nation and around the world, we have a God who takes pity, just as He did with Israel. We have a sovereign God to turn to.

Hebrews 14:16 –

Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Prayer must be a priority!!!

We must have a daily relationship with our Lord and Savior.

Our prayer life must be a practice we do daily.

Not just to go through the motions, but to have a true and sincere relationship with God.

When famines come, God has given us refuge. It is up to us to move into the shadow of the Lord.

Are there circumstances in your life that you want changed?

Have you truly drawn into the Lord?

Are you truly praying for the nation? Are you praying and drawing into God?

Here is a challenge for you this week:

(1) Fast for one day

1. This can be as simple as taking an indulgence out of your life for a day or not eating for a day.

- a. During the fast, ask the Lord to strengthen you

Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always (1 Chronicles 16:11).

2. Ask the Lord to show you any area in your life that requires repentance:

- a. Ask the Lord for forgiveness and repent

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

3. Offer you prayers with a sincere desire to see God's will done

The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth (Psalm 145:18).

4. When you pray, believe!!!

Paul wrote to the Colossians: ***Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful (Colossians 4:2).***

C.H. Spurgeon once said, "*Prayer pulls the rope down below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give only an occasional jerk at the rope. But he who communicates with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might*".

My word to the church today is the Word Paul tells us: "pray ***continually***" (1 Thessalonians 5:16)