

A CALL TO MOURNING AND PRAYER

Text: Joel 1:1-12

Key Word: Repentance

Key Thought: God Is Calling Our City to a Time of Mourning and Repentance

“Has not God promised, *‘I will yet shake the heavens and the earth?’* (Haggai 2:21).

Without exception, all true revivals of the past began after years of agonizing, hell-robbing, earth-shaking, heaven-sent intercession . . . When the church gets a divorce from the world and worldliness; when we can ignore so-called Christian entertainers who attempt to combine Hollywood and holiness; when we cease from the strivings of the flesh and recognize that the Bible written yesterday is also for today and for tomorrow, and that it alone has the formula for revival; we shall at least have started on the road to the reformation of the Church, which must proceed the true spiritual awakening which alone can save our generation.

Why revival God’s way? Because we have tried every other way. We must still begin on our knees – **we plead or we perish! It’s Pentecost or holocaust, revival or wrath.**”

Leonard Ravenhill
“*Revivals God’s way*”
Preface

Our City and area is in a dire need of a revival. We must become convinced that we will not survive without a heaven sent revival. Our City has been renown for its high level of unemployment and welfare recipients. We are higher than the national statistics for single moms, sexual abuse, psychological irregularities, marriage problems, and lawlessness (smuggling).

Our once rich farming area is facing a crisis situation. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Haggai when it comes to a description of this area.

“Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘ Give careful thought to your ways.

6. You had planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.”

Haggai 1:5,6

The prophet Joel (his name contains both the name Yahweh or Jehovah and Elohim or God – having then the meaning “*Jehovah [or the Lord] is God*”) comes from obscurity and returns to the same after proclaiming a call to repentance to those living in Judah. He was sent to prepare the people of God for the coming of the great Day of the Lord (Jehovah). He is believed to have prophesied this message around the date of 836 BC. He was sent with a message to call out to the people with a clear voice.

What Was the Call That He Was Given to Proclaim?

I. A CALL TO ATTENTIVENESS (Joel 1:2,4, 5b-7,9a,10,11b,12)

II. A CALL TO TRANSMITTANCE (Joel 1:3)

III. A CALL TO REPENTANCE (Joel 1:5a, 8,9b, 11a, 12b)

I. A CALL TO ATTENTIVENESS (Joel 1:2,4, 5b-7,9a,10,11b,12)

Apathy was a common condition among the people of Judah before the prophet Joel arrived on the scene. They had fallen asleep spiritually speaking.

In 1998 the Australian Plague Locust Commission was formed in order to prepare and combat the potential of the largest locust infestation to hit Southern Australia in its history. They were preparing for twice the infestation the next year because of the high levels of egg laying and an expected 95% survival of those eggs. There was also an upsurge of locusts in Saudi Arabia, Madagascar, Africa and Western Asia, and Mexico.

Natural disasters of every kind are becoming such a common occurrence that we are becoming desensitized to their frequency and increasing intensity. On average, there are 16 major earthquakes (M 7.0-8.0+) worldwide per year . . . So far in 2021 from January through May, there have been 8 major earthquake and 69 strong earthquakes. In 2020, there were 9 major earthquakes and in 2019 there were 10. We continue to hear news reports of numerous floods, fires, volcanoes, hurricanes, meteorite impacts, droughts, climate changes (global warming & cooling), world population growth.

Joel called upon the people to judge for themselves whether or not they had ever seen such a thing in the days that had gone by. Their vineyards were no longer producing grapes. The fig trees were being destroyed as the bark was being eaten away. The grain offering (wheat & barley) and drink offering (vineyards) were also being destroyed. Even the pomegranate, palm and apple trees were dried up. How much more proof did they need to help them realize that God was trying to get their attention?

Earlier in history God told Pharaoh to let His people go from bondage. He also warned the pharaoh that He would send a disaster upon the land if he refused to obey the command of God.

I. A CALL TO ATTENTIVENESS (Joel 1:2,4, 5b-7,9a,10,11b,12) (Contd.)

“If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into the country tomorrow.

5. They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields.

6. They will fill your houses and those of all your officials and all the Egyptians – something neither your fathers nor your forefathers had ever seen from the day they settled in this land until now.”

Exodus 10:4-6

II. A CALL TO TRANSMITTANCE (Joel 1:3)

The prophet Joel also made another statement that we cannot overlook.

“ Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.”

Joel 1:3

Four generations are included in this transmission of truth. Our children need to know what God is saying to the Church. **They have an ear and they need to learn to hear the voice of God.** They are told all kinds of ungodly lies and deception. It is time for them to hear truth. We need to guard what is going into their ears and minds. **Family values will return when family altars are reestablished.** The masks that are attempting to disguise what is truly happening are about to be ripped away in more ways than one.

Our children need to know that God is trying to get our attention in order to prepare us for the Rapture. The Church of Jesus Christ is simply not ready. If the rapture took place today, many lukewarm Christians would be left behind in disbelief and tormented for being indifferent to the truth they had been once taught. **We have not given birth to our children to have them worship the spirit of the antichrist.**

Our children need to know the urgency of the hour. They should not wait another day to get right with God. By *“the signs of the times”* we must inform them that tomorrow could be too late. They need to realize that prolonging their decision to serve God could have disastrous effects upon their future. **They need to know that today is the day they need to repent.** If they have put off their decision to serve God they must not delay any longer. They must give serious thought to repenting while there is still time.

II. A CALL TO TRANSMITTANCE (Joel 1:3) (Contd.)

Our children are best suited for serving God. That is why God created them. We have been told that they find it difficult to understand the things of God. That is a BIG lie! Their Creator has made them with an inherent quality of openness to the Word of God. The children of Israel were commanded to transmit the Word of God to their children. It was not the responsibility of Moses or Aaron.

*“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. **Teach them to your children and to their children after them.**”*

*10. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, ‘**Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.**’”*

Deuteronomy 4:9,10

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

6. These Commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

*7. **Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.***

8. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

9. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.”

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

III. A CALL TO REPENTANCE (Joel 1:5a, 8,9b, 11a, 12b)

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: . . .

4. a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,”

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

“ When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.”

Ecclesiastes 7:14

I sense an urgency to call this Church and any Christians I come in contact with to cry out to God in repentance for either themselves or others. The prophet Joel called out to the drunkards (5a); the priests (9b); the farmers (11a) and vine growers (11b) to mourn and grieve for the sin of the nation. True ministers should deeply feel the ungodliness of their nation. They should set an example of confession and repentance.

The prophet Joel addresses the congregation of Israel and tells them to mourn like a virgin who on the day of her wedding was deprived of her husband by his untimely death. Instead, of being dressed in her wedding garment, she is dressed in sackcloth, a rough garment covering her entire body and indicating the depth of her grief and penitence.

I am like most people in this place. I love to laugh more than I love to cry. But I realize that sometimes tears can bring about healing. Tears are often needed to cleanse the wounds of deep-seated guilt and emotional scars. There are times in life when laughing is just not appropriate. We live in a nation that is staggering on its way to hell. **God wants His Church to sound a clarion call and set a pattern of repentance and honesty before Him while there is still time for change.**

This may cause some of us to go to a brother or sister and ask for forgiveness for words spoken or things done. It may require that we cry out to God for a change of heart to someone who has hurt us in the past. **I also believe that if we can deal with a matter between God and us alone, than that is as far as it should go and will go. There are certain things that we have done in our past which needs to be left in our past when God has forgiven them.** Biblical counselling may be required to wisely deal with this important area.

III. A CALL TO REPENTANCE (Joel 1:5a, 8,9b, 11a, 12b) (Contd.)

REPENTANCE: THROWING IT ALL AWAY

******* **OBSERVATION** "He who neglects the present moment throws away all he has." That observation by Johann Friedrich von Schiller, a great German historian and playwright, holds much truth for all of our lives. **THROWING IT ALL AWAY.**

Early one morning fire broke out in a house on a narrow street. The fire spread quickly, and flames were leaping high into the air before the fire engines could get to the scene. A young man appeared at an upper window in his pajamas. Firefighters quickly placed a ladder against the burning building, but the man refused to come down. **Instead, he yelled that he had to get dressed first.**

The firefighters pleaded, "*Come as you are! Come as you are!*," but to no avail. The firefighters tried to climb the stairs from below, but they were turned back by the flames. When a rescuer tried to enter through a lower window, the heat and smoke forced him away. Suddenly the walls and roof fell in. The man waited too long, and was buried under the ruins.

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO OUR LIVES? The man refused to do immediately what was best for himself because of what someone might say about his appearance later. Thus, the young man literally threw his life away. Millions of people make the same foolish mistake daily.

I read about an experiment in which a rat was placed in a box and shocked until it huddled in a particular corner. To avoid future shocks, the rat soon learned to run to that corner as soon as it was placed in the box. **How much of your life is spent avoiding the disapproving "shocks" of those around you?** Do you disregard your own beliefs, and compromise who you are as a person, so others will like you? That is easy to do, especially in matters of faith.

Many people do not live according to their beliefs because they are concerned about what others will think or say. If that includes you, then in effect you are throwing away the most significant part of yourself -- your spiritual life. Live each day according to God's standards, no matter how people may react. **Because some things are too important to throw away -- including yourself.** *******

<http://www.elbourne.org/sermons/index.mv?illustration+4867>

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Date: Jan 23/2022

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: C - Arise Shine (For Thy Light is Come)

C - Change My Heart O God

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Haggai 2:21; Haggai 1:5,6

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II. A CALL TO TRANSMITTANCE (Joel 1:3) - Deuteronomy 4:9,10; Deuteronomy 6:4-9

III. A CALL TO REPENTANCE (Joel 1:5a, 8,9b, 11a, 12b) - Ecclesiastes 3:1,4; Ecclesiastes 7:14