

Joel: The Day of the Lord

Series: Major Messages from the Minor Prophets

June 25, 2017 – Sandra Giet

Were kicking off the summer with a new series we started last week “Major Messages from the Minor Prophets”. We learned last week that the Minor Prophets refers to the last twelve books of the Old Testament. And “minor” referring only to their shorter length ...not their importance. Although they are minor in length, there is a major message in each of these prophets....which speaks to us still today.

In fact this morning, we’re going to be looking at the book of Joel. It’s only 73 verses long. You can read the whole thing in a few minutes. Three short chapters and yet Joel had divine insight to see God at work in their midst at that time in Israel and foresight to see all the way to the very end of the age. He had incredible insight for our lives today to discern how God is at work in our time and place.

Just give a little background to Joel. All that we know about him personally is found in verse 1

Joel 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

His name Joel in the Hebrew means "the Lord is God." His father’s name is Pethuel. That’s it. We don’t have anything else about Joel. He may be the least known of all the prophets of Israel. There’s no reference to kings or times or places.

Like all true prophets, Joel was commissioned to call the people back to the worship of the one true God; and he did this by declaring "the word of the Lord".

Joel 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

It was the task of the PRIESTS to teach the people The Law. And it was the responsibility of the PROPHETS to call the people back to the Lord whenever they strayed from His Law. The prophets also interpreted historical events in the light of the Word of God to help the people understand God's will for their lives.

**And so in the Book of Joel there is a Truth, a Challenge and a Promise for us.
First the Truth.**

Joel is helping make sense of disaster. We learn in the first few verses that something bad, something really bad has happened in Israel. As we read, you’ll see the Style in different. Its poetic and strong, forceful, metaphorical. It hits us here. Its poetic designed to evoke feeling.

Joel 1:1-4

The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel. ² Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors?

³ Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.

⁴ After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops, the swarming locusts took what was left! After them came the hopping locusts, and then the stripping locusts, too!

Not just one wave of disaster, but wave after wave of disaster.

Have you ever felt like that? Something happens. Wipes out your savings. And just as you are catching up something else hits you? It just feels like wave after wave coming at you?

PHOTO 1: LOCUSTS

Locusts are devastating. They didn't just eat the fruit on the vine, they ate the vine itself.

A swarm of locusts can contain up to 100 million locusts per square mile. This swarm passed through Mauritania, West Africa. 2004

Locusts can devastate the vegetation of a countryside with such speed and thoroughness, and nothing can stop them.

It's goes on to describe this devastation? Vs. 10

The fields are ruined, the land is stripped bare. The grain is destroyed, the grapes have shriveled, and the olive oil is gone. ¹¹ Despair, all you farmers! Wail, all you vine growers! Weep, because the wheat and barley— all the crops of the field—are ruined.

¹² The grapevines have dried up, and the fig trees have withered. The pomegranate trees, palm trees, and apple trees— all the fruit trees—have dried up. And the people's joy has dried up with them.

This is describing not just locusts but also a severe drought. There was nothing left to eat or drink. The grain was gone, the wine was gone, the oil was gone, the fruit was gone. Even the grass was gone.

So much hard work goes into cultivating the fields. You have prepare and till the soil, Plant seed, cultivate the crops, and when the harvest is just about ready, the locusts come and clean out the lot.

All that work, the back-breaking work you put in and what do you get out of it? Nothing!

Some of you may have experienced a little of that on some level. You've worked hard towards some business venture or invested in something that just got wiped out. A bad venture. Effort day by day month by month year by year, has led to massive disapoinment. What has come after all my effort?

In Israel at this time, when disaster came upon crops, that was their food source. You couldn't fly in food from Mexico or South America when their crops failed. If the new wine failed that was it for the year until the next crop.

You've heard the phrase, "A disaster of biblical proportions." This was that.

And so Joel is bringing prophetic understanding regarding these disasters and what we learn is that what was happening was called The Day of the Lord.

THE DAY OF THE LORD-

This is one of the major themes of the book of Joel, "The Day of the Lord". Joel is the prophet of the Day of the Lord. He mentions it 5 times, starting in verse 15

¹⁴ Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. ¹⁵ Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty. 1:14-15

And-

Joel 2:1-2,

Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand — a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness.

Joel 2:11

The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?

The term "Day of the Lord" is used in Scripture to refer to different periods when God sent judgment to His people,

A key theme in the prophets. The Day of the Lord describes times in the past when God appeared in a powerful way and would save his people and confront evil. Like the Plagues in Exodus

But the prophets saw in these past events pointers to a future time when God would again confront evil among his people and also among the nations and bring salvation to the whole world.

Joel 2: 31-32

And I will cause wonders in the heavens and on the earth— blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun will become dark, and the moon will turn blood red before that great and terrible day of the Lord arrives. ³² But everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,

Joel sees a future with two sides: salvation and blessing for those who call on the name of the Lord, but judgment and destruction for the people who go their own way.

In NT times, "The day of the LORD" is when Jesus returns and unites heaven and earth dispenses judgment and mercy.

Jesus spoke of this Final Day of the Lord, when he said,

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

⁴¹ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Matthew 25:31,34,41

The Israelites thought the Day of the LORD would be a good thing. When God breaks in, our enemy will be conquered and everything will be hunky dory.

But NO! the prophets are warning, “No this is judgment.” They didn’t realize it was judgment for them.

And what was their sin? Unfaithfulness. This is always the problem of God’s people.

The people of God had broken covenant with him. They became unfaithful to God, even while they were enjoying all his material gifts—grain, wine, and oil; figs, pomegranates, grapes and apples; herds of cattle and sheep. The autumn and spring rains came at their usual time, providing for God’s people, and they lived in security and prosperity.

Instead of being loyal to the God who revealed himself to them through the Scriptures and worshiping and serving him alone, they worshiped and served idols. They became fascinated with paganism, the gods of neighboring cultures.... They rejected their God while still receiving all his bountiful, material benefits.

As is often the case in the church today.

Like the prodigal son, we tend towards straying away from our heavenly Father and longing to live independent lives, of sin and entertainment. We find living with God perhaps, too restrictive. But that is only because we do not like holiness. So we wander, seeking happiness outside of the holy, true God. We easily forget all the blessings he has given us, or even attribute them to our own abilities or to false gods. And as the people of Israel did during the time of Joel, we wander, looking for water in dry lands, in broken cisterns or in wells we dig ourselves.

And God will deal with us in judgment. When things begin to go wrong in our lives, maybe, just maybe it’s God’s way of saying to you, “Look, you are not your own boss. You are not your own. You are bought with a price. I am God.” He is waiting for you to realize that he is God -- not you. You don’t have the right to run your own life. You don’t have the right to do with your life whatever you please. He alone has that right

That’s the first part The Truth- Now the second part there is a Challenge

The Challenge: Repentance

First he says to Call an Assembly: 1:13-15

¹⁴ Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord. ¹⁵ Alas for that day! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

And in chapter 2 it says to call everyone, elders, children, nursing babies and priests, and even brides and bridegrooms,...

It was a time of corporate repentance.

Joel 2:12-13

¹² "Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." ¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Rend. tear (something) into two or more pieces.

Synonyms: tear/rip in two, split, rupture, wrench violently, sever;

PHOTO 2 – Statue

Rending is a Jewish custom that involves violently tearing clothing. It is an expression of grief and mourning and it is meant to allow for a release of anger that doesn't harm anyone.

Joel pleads, rend your hearts and not your Clothes: To fast, weep and mourn.

God isn't looking for a stylized, expression of repentance. Sackcloths and ashes.... Something Public.

PHOTO 3 - Rend Hearts

Joel is saying repentance can be just a show that we put on to get out of trouble. God wants genuine change for his people to stop their selfishness and evil.

He's looking for integrity of heart and action... weep, mourn, fast, pray, rend your hearts... Repentance that sees action... I have actually changed...

Sometimes we try to change an outward action without addressing our hearts.

We're like the little boy bouncing around in the medical waiting room. Whose mother is telling him to sit down and be still! But he doesn't want to sit down. He's climbing on the chairs and running around. So she grabs him by the shoulders and sits him down in the chair. Then he looked up at her defiantly and said, "I'm sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up inside!"

Do you ever do that?

It's when we say "Sorry", and then just keep on doing what we're doing.

We're saying "Sorry" with our mouths, but "NOT SORRY" with our lives.

God is more concerned with the heart than the outside. .

When our hearts wander from this God, he will fight against us to bring us to repentance. How have you experienced God drawing you back in your own life?

When we become self-confident and prayer starts to feel unnecessary, What does he do? Maybe He does something to trip us up a little bit, just so we aren't so proud, self sufficient. Maybe tensions rise at work. There is conflict at home. Sleep isn't as restful. Perhaps you experience depression, anxiety. Everywhere you turn, there is no joy. He boxes us in. The thing we're striving for. Seems to get farther and farther away from from our reach.

What is he doing? He is a jealous God and wont share our heart.

When he says in vs 12, "Return to me with *all* your heart," it is clear, isn't it, what he is fighting for: *all* our heart, not a piece on Sunday and a piece at mealtime and a piece at bedtime. If you are his, he will fight you until you give him all your heart all the time.

Last week we looked at Hosea, which describes the people of Israel going after other gods like a bride leaving her husband. And God says in Hosea 2:6-7

Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them; she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.'

God will fight against us and blocks the joy of our lives until we return with our whole heart to him.

Return to ME. Come back to me. Tender... language in the Hebrew is intimate. Like a father to a son.

Joel 2:12-13

¹²"Even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning." ¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments.

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Return to the Lord your God for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love (2:13).

He's quoting here from the book of Exodus how God forgave Israel after the golden calf incidence. And from that story Joel learned that God's mercy and love is more powerful than judgement.

Don't be bitter at God because he clogs your way and frustrates your day. Every divine stroke is the discipline of a loving Father and a blow against our pride, our self-reliance, and our love for the world.

Thank him for being so loving that he is the shepherd that goes after the wandering sheep, that he disciplines us as a father a child.

The Lord is gracious and compassionate slow to anger rich in mercy

PHOTO 4 – Giving Your Heart to Him

God doesn't enjoy judgment. That isn't what he is after. He never enjoys judging anyone. What he seeks is a heart that will listen to him, belongs to him, and opens the door for the blessings that God wants to pour in.

Joel 2:18

Then the Lord was jealous for his land and took pity on his people.

God was filled with Passion for his land and pity on his people.

See there is a way we position ourselves for blessings-

What do we do? Repent

What does God do? Restore

Judgment isn't the last word. God is a merciful God. His heart is always to restore and bless.

The Truth; The Challenge and now

The Promise: Restoration

Judgment isn't God's final Word. He is a God of Restoration.

Okay, this is where it gets really good. If you're drifting, focus now. Because this is amazing! Astounding.

Picture of the grace and compassion of God.

He exchanges judgment for blessing.

- Material Blessing

The Lord replied to them: "I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations. 2:19

Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.

²⁴ The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

2:23-24

Joel 2:25-26

²⁵ “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm my great army that I sent among you.

²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed.

²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.

RESTORATION is a supernatural thing.

Money can be restored, a car can be restored, an artwork can be restored.

But time cannot be restored.

God would give back harvests that have been destroyed. An abundance to make up everything that was lost.

Lost years come in many varieties...

Fruitless years

“What has come after all my effort?”

Locusts years can also be suffering painful years. Loss of a loved one. You had plans for the future. You had hoped these years would be your golden years, full.

Illness. Chronic illness.

Depression: Mental illness. You thought in terms of what you would like to do. .

It can happen early in life. College / High school. You expected to be play a sport. And you have an injury that has kept you out for the whole season. The year the locusts...

It's gone and you have to find a way of living with that.

So much hoped for.

Selfish years...

Lost years – come in many varieties

He promises he will restore what was lost to us. Material Blessings and

- Spiritual Blessing

Joel 2:28-29

²⁸ “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

He is going to bring his divine presence among his people it will become real and accessible for EVERYONE.

So Significant - young, old, rich poor, Jew, Gentile..

All people... everyone. sons/daughter, men women.

All who turn to him will receive his spirit.

HIS SPIRIT HIS PRESENCE will be poured out. ON ALL PEOPLE..

God says he will bring his divine presence. It will be real and accessible for everyone. God's spirit will come and transform his people so they can truly love and follow him.

Vision of HOPE-

God's spirit would come to transform us so we can truly love and follow him
We know this happened at Pentecost Acts 2. When the Holy Spirit came like a wine.

Acts 2:38-39

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

He will reverse the effects of the judgment turning to salvation.

All the things that have happened to you...
Perhaps your marriage is in trouble, your kids are struggling.
You can't pay your mortgage... your car is getting repossessed.
All the stuff taken from you...

He's about to do the supernatural. You thought it was gone.

IT'S RESTORATION TIME!

It's a recovery day, restoration time.
This is the time and season... all the things the devil has taken from you, God will give back to you.
Restoration season, Restoration time.

We can position ourselves in a way for God to restore our lives.
Anyone need some restoration today?
Maybe some of you need to fast, and weep, mourn...
Maybe you've taken sin too lightly.
You've tolerated it. Not a big deal...

He let the locusts come because you are too arrogant to recognize it's him he has given you everything.
Sometimes he takes things from us so we can recognize who gave it to you!

Some of you are here today, maybe because you've hit the bottom, and you've finally turned to God.
Are you listening? He has a purpose... for the locusts, for the drama...
Whatever it takes for God to bring you to him. He does it so you will turn your heart to him.
Some of you have locusts all around you, on your job, in your marriage, around your kids
Repent and turn around, let him restore you to where he wants you to be.

Maybe we need to stop blaming the devil and realize God is trying to get your attention.
He brought the locusts so that you will repent and turn your life around.
You are going to walk out of here restored.
Jesus died and was buried and rose because he loves you and he wants a life with you.

How does God restore? By deepening our communion with Jesus.
You will know that I am the Lord your God.
Wonderful restorative promise. They will know a communion with the Lord. Greater than anything they have ever known in their lives before.
Ask him. Fill my heart with a new love and gratitude. Let my loss of these years make my love for Jesus greater.
Restore to me the years that the locusts have eaten.
Another way. Multiply your fruitfulness
The locusts have eaten too many years of our lives. Too many fruitless years.
Lord give to us some years now, where there is more lasting fruit born, that all our years of small harvests.

TESTIMONY- Jennifer Loza

You may have a story of Restoration in your own life.
I want you to hear a recent story of how God is Restoring what the Locusts have eaten in a friend of mine's life. Jennifer Loza. If you were at the Women's retreat, you will remember Jennifer. God started his work of restoration there. But that was just the beginning. I want her to catch you up.

PHOTO 5 – Wheelchair

PHOTO 6 – Jennifer

Lord do you restoring work and make us the kind of people...
Let this year of our life be the most fruitful of our lives.

Joel 3:21, The Lord dwells in Zion!

Ch 3 The Future Day of the Lord.

Revelation 21:5

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Conclusion

"This little book of Joel explores profound ideas about how human sin and failure wreak such devastating destruction in our world. About how God longs to show mercy to those who will just own up to their sin and confess it.

And about how all of that leads us to hope that God will one day defeat evil in our world but also inside of us and bring his healing presence to make all things new. And that's what the book of Joel is all about." Bible Project

COMMUNION

Jesus Christ ultimately came to convert hearts.

⁹ For God chose to save us through our Lord Jesus Christ, not to pour out his anger on us. ¹⁰ Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. 1 Thess 5:9-10

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The Truth: Joel helps the Israelites make sense of disaster.

The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel. ²Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors?

³Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation.

⁴After the cutting locusts finished eating the crops, the swarming locusts took what was left! After them came the hopping locusts, and then the stripping locusts, too! Joel 1:1-4

The vine is dried up and the fig tree is withered; the pomegranate, the palm and the apple tree—all the trees of the field—are dried up. Surely the people’s joy is withered away. Joel 1:12

THE DAY OF THE LORD

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Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand — a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Joel 2:1-2

The day of the Lord is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it? Joel 2:11

³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ³¹The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. ³²And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Joel 2:30-32

The Challenge: Repentance

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The Promise: Restoration

- Material Blessing

The Lord replied to them: “I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations. Joel 2:19

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MAJOR MESSAGES

— FROM THE
MINOR
PROPHETS



Joel 1:1

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JOEL



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Joel 1:10-12



JOEL

The Day of the Lord

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Matthew 25:31-33

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.



JOEL

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world....

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 26:34,41



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¹³ Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.



JOEL



A red fabric with a large tear, revealing a blue sky with two pink hearts. The text "REND YOUR HEART" is written in white, bold, italicized capital letters across the top of the tear.

REND YOUR HEART

NOT YOUR GARMENTS

Hosea 2:6-7

Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes;
I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.
She will chase after her lovers but not catch them;
she will look for them but not find them. Then she
will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first,
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JOEL

It ain't much,
but it's all I got.

It's all I
ever wanted.



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- **Material Blessing**



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²⁶ You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Joel 2:25-26

Joel 2:25-28

²⁷ Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.



[Hosea 2:14](#)
Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes; I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way. She will chase after her lovers but not catch them, she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.'

Restoration



JOEL

The Promise: Restoration

- **Spiritual Blessing**

Joel 2:28-29

²⁸ “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

JOEL



Acts 2:38-39

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”



JOEL

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It's Restoration Time!



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THE Retreat is
Over and this is what is
Left!





This little book of Joel explores profound ideas about how human sin and failure wreak such devastating destruction in our world.

About how God longs to show mercy to those who will just own up to their sin and confess it.

And about how all of that leads us to hope that God will one day defeat evil in our world, but also inside of us and bring his healing presence to make all things new. And that's what the book of Joel is all about."

The Bible Project: Joel



MAJOR MESSAGES

— FROM THE
MINOR
PROPHETS

