

CP Discussion Questions

Joel 1

Sermon: Devastation that Requires Response

- ❖ ***The prophet calls God's people to face their distress with fasting and lament (1:1-14)***
 - The people must first recognize the severity of what their sins have brought about (vv. 1-4)
 - Sin's destructive outcomes summon the people to cry out to God (vv. 5-14)
 - **Question:** Are there aspects of sin's consequences that you've grown comfortable with? When was the last time you were distressed by sin's effect?
- ❖ ***Crying out to God is the only option when confronted with sin's consequences (1:15-20)***
 - The people should mourn because it is God who is bringing destruction. (1:15-18)
 - Sin's devastation should leave a longing for God. (1:19-20)
 - **Question:** What things do we turn to when confronted by sin? Is our response to run to God or run from God?
- ❖ **Bottom Line: Confrontation with sin and its effects should only drive us closer to the heart of God.**

Understanding Scripture

1. **Read the passage aloud.**
 - **Question:** How would the original audience have understood this passage?
 - **Question:** What was God's desire for them?
2. **Reread key verse(s) aloud.**
 - **Question:** What does this teach us about the human soul, desires, or behavior?
 - **Question:** What does this teach us about the nature, desires, or behavior of God?
3. **Ask if anything is difficult to understand in the passage, or simply point it out yourself.**
 - i. Back up from the confusing verse and reread the whole section slowly—highlight the author's flow of thought.
 - ii. Ask everyone, "What are some possible interpretations?" Encourage curiosity!
 - iii. If needed, provide clarification, but admit if you don't have a satisfactory explanation, and volunteer to research answers. Share your findings over text or at the next meeting.
4. **Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences to refocus the group ("Okay, so far we've seen Joel...")**
 - **Question:** What does this say about our relationship with God and/or each other?
 - **Question:** How do the teachings, actions, or person of Jesus shed light on this passage?

Applying Scripture

5. **Allow free-flowing discussion, incorporating questions focused on heart and habit transformation.**
 - **Joel 1:1-4:** Why is it important to recognize the severity of sin and its consequences? What does failing to do this look like?
 - **Joel 1:5-14:** Why do you think Joel calls on drunkards, farmers, and priests to lament? When was the last time you lamented over the effects of sin around you and the world?
 - **Joel 1:15-18:** What emotions or thoughts come up when you read that God allows or brings discipline because of the people's sin? How do you tend to respond to hardship or times of destruction in your life? Do you view it as punishment, correction, an opportunity to grow, or something else? Why?
 - **Joel 1:19-20:** When was the last time you cried out to God in need, not just for help or assistance, in a difficult situation? Are you quick to seek other solutions before turning to God in prayer? If so, why do you think this happens?
 - **Application:** This week, how are you going to develop and/or build a rhythm of confession and prayer that keeps your heart near God, even when you fail? Who in your life can you invite to remind you of God's mercy when you are tempted to hide in shame or self-pity?