

Pastor Jason Huffman

11/2/2025

Joel 1:9-20

Message Title: Godly Crisis Response

Big Idea: There is a godly way to respond to a crisis.

1:9 The grain offering and the drink offering have been cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests mourn, who minister to the Lord. 10 The field is wasted, the land mourns; for the grain is ruined, the new wine is dried up, the oil fails.

Offerings are an outward display of an inward love for God.

11 Be ashamed, you farmers, wail, you vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field has perished. 12 The vine has dried up, and the fig tree has withered; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree—All the trees of the field are withered; surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

1. Examine your true condition.

The first step to getting anywhere is admitting we are not where we want to be.

Spiritually, fruit, wine, oil, & joy are all related to the Spirit & their absence points to a problem.

13 Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; come, lie all night in sackcloth, you who minister to my God; for the grain offering and the drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.

This is not the time to think & ponder; it is the time to act & lament

2. Lament the losses.

A lament brings honest complaints & sorrow to the Lord but it doesn't stop w/ there.

In a lament, we mourn the broken condition of the world but we look forward in faith to God's restoration.

Psalm 13:1 O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever?

How long will you look the other way?

2 How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,
with sorrow in my heart every day?

How long will my enemy have the upper hand?

3 Turn and answer me, O Lord my God!

Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.

4 Don't let my enemies gloat, saying, "We have defeated him!"

Don't let them rejoice at my downfall.

5 But I trust in your unfailing love.

I will rejoice because you have rescued me.

6 I will sing to the Lord

because he is good to me.

14 Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the elders *and* all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.

Consecrate means to declare a time as holy & set it aside for the Lord.

15 Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord *is* at hand; it shall come as destruction from the Almighty. 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God? 17 The seed shrivels under the clods, storehouses are in shambles; barns are broken down, for the grain has withered. 18 How the animals groan! The herds of cattle are restless, Because they have no pasture; even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment. 19 O Lord, to You I cry out; for fire has devoured the open pastures, and a flame has burned all the trees of the field. 20 The beasts of the field also cry out to You, for the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the open pastures.

3. Fast for the future.

The theme for the day of the Lord appears 5 times & is critical in Joel.

Luke 18:8b ...Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" 9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

We don't want a crisis to stop us from fulfilling our calling to care, to love, to serve, to bring the gospel & the kingdom of God to those who need it & those God desires to reach thru us.

Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.' 41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you

did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.' **46** And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Message Summary

The sermon explored how the people faced a devastating locust plague that destroyed their crops, their offerings, and their joy. Yet Joel called them to go beyond the physical disaster to the spiritual opportunity it presented.

LIFE GROUP GUIDE

5-10 minutes connecting personally with how everyone is doing.

45 minutes going over message with discussion questions and life applications.

5-10 minutes praying for each other

Discussion Questions

Look over these questions before your group time. Write down your answers or ideas for at least a few questions if not all. You may not get to every question during your time but speak up if you want to talk about one of them in particular. Always try to start with question #1.

1. What stood out to you and/or what do you think God might be speaking about from this message?
2. When facing a crisis, do you tend to compartmentalize or look at the bright side rather than honestly lamenting before God? What might you be avoiding by doing so?
3. What would it look like in your life to consecrate a fast and deny your normal physical routines to pursue the Lord more deeply during a difficult season?
4. Can you identify a past crisis that became a catalyst for spiritual growth in your life? What made your response different from times when crises led you away from God?
5. How do you reconcile the tension between trusting God and honestly expressing complaints and sorrow to Him in a biblical lament?
6. Why do you think we struggle to admit when we're not doing well spiritually? What keeps us from being honest about our true spiritual condition?

5 Day Devotional

This five-day devotional will be taking a deeper dive into the sermon from this weekend. Join us as we explore how crises can serve as catalysts for spiritual growth and draw us closer to God. Through the guidance of Joel's message, we'll discover how to respond to life's challenges in a manner that honors God and helps us grow.

Day 1

Reading: Joel 1:1-12; Psalm 139:23-24

The locust plague in Joel's time stripped away everything—crops, offerings, and joy. Sometimes God allows crises to reveal what's truly in our hearts. Like the priests who could no longer bring offerings, we must ask: What has consumed what belongs to God? What distractions have eaten away at our worship? David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart." Today, resist the urge to fake spiritual health. Honestly assess the fruit of your life. Are you producing love, joy, and peace? Is the Holy Spirit actively working in you? Admitting where we truly are is the first step toward where God wants us to be. Don't live in denial or past victories—face your current reality with courage and bring it before the Lord.

Reflection Question: What areas of my life need honest examination today?

Day 2

Reading: Joel 1:13-14; Psalm 13

Our culture resists sadness, but Scripture makes room for lament. Joel called the priests to "lie all night in sackcloth"—to fully feel the weight of loss. Lament isn't doubt; it's honest faith that brings real pain to a real God. Notice Psalm 13: David complains, questions, even accuses God of forgetting him—yet he ends trusting God's unfailing love. Lament doesn't rush to silver linings; it sits in the ashes while clinging to hope. When crisis strikes, don't compartmentalize or spiritually bypass your grief. Mourn what's broken. Cry out to God. But don't stop there—like David, move from complaint to confidence. God can handle your honesty. He invites you to bring your whole heart, including the broken parts, into His presence.

Reflection Question: What loss have I not properly mourned before God?

Day 3

Reading: Joel 1:13-16; Ezekiel 22:30

Joel's priests weren't just mourning their own suffering—they lamented that offerings to God were withheld. When did we last weep over God's glory being diminished? We readily cry about personal disappointments but rarely grieve that God doesn't receive the worship He deserves. Our culture withholds honor from God daily. His name is profaned. His people are lukewarm. His commands are ignored. Do we feel the weight of that? Ezekiel records God searching for someone to "stand in the gap"—someone who would intercede for a rebellious people. Crisis should drive us not just to self-concern but to God-concern. Let your heart break for what breaks God's heart. Pray for the Church to awaken. Fast for revival. Mourn the glory God is not receiving through His people.

Reflection Question: When have I mourned for God's glory rather than just my comfort?

Day 4

Reading: Joel 1:14-20; Luke 18:1-8

Joel commanded a consecrated fast—setting aside normal routines to desperately seek God. Why? Because "the day of the Lord is at hand." Fasting declares that spiritual reality is more urgent than physical appetite. It's training for endurance, building faith muscles for when Christ returns. Jesus asked a haunting question: "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" Don't let crisis make you spiritually lazy. Don't medicate your pain with distractions and scrolling. Instead, use hardship as training ground. Deny lesser things to pursue the greater. Cry out to God not just for present relief but for future readiness. The day of the Lord is coming—a day of judgment and reward. Will you be found faithful? Fasting helps align our priorities with eternity's values.

Reflection Question: What spiritual discipline do I need to embrace to prepare for Christ's return?

Day 5

Reading: Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:14-26

Jesus' description of judgment day is startling: nations separated based on what they did—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting prisoners. Not what they intended or believed, but what they actually did. James echoes this: "Faith without works is dead." True faith produces good fruit. Crisis reveals whether our faith is genuine or theoretical. When the locusts came, did Joel's people have offerings to bring? When Christ returns, will He find active faith or empty intentions? Your response to today's challenges—whether you serve others, whether you give sacrificially, whether you pursue holiness—matters eternally. Don't waste your crisis. Let it catalyze authentic transformation. Let hardship produce perseverance, character, and hope. Let your faith become visible through love in action.

Reflection Question: What concrete action will demonstrate my faith is alive and active today?