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Episode 211 - Responding in Repentance
What keeps us from repenting?
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Jerry Green:

Welcome, friends, to this March 8th season of Faith Made Simple with our pastor and teacher, Todd Smith. I'm Jerry Greene, and for the past seven seasons I've had the privilege of serving as host of the podcast. We're so grateful the Lord has afforded us the opportunity to meet with you each week and share his infallible Word. Our teacher, Pastor Todd, has a passion for explaining Scripture because, as we've said all along. Understanding and obeying God's Word is key in the Christian's life. James 1:25 tells us that God blesses those who are obedient. So let's listen now as Todd shares his thoughts for today.

Todd Smith:

Hey — thanks for tuning in to the podcast today. I don't know what you've got going on — if you're in the car, out for a run, doing yard work, or just trying to tune somebody out — but I'm glad you're listening. I want to talk a little about the future. You know the great quips of Yogi Berra? “A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore.” He also said, “The future ain't what it used to be.” Let that settle for a moment.

The future may not be what it used to be — but the future is what God says it will be. That's the great promise of God's providence. I want us to take a look at a prophet named Joel. He wrote the book of Joel and was called to warn God's people — to warn of coming judgment and to call them to repentance.

We know almost nothing about Joel personally; Joel 1:1 simply names him (the son of Be-Thel). The Hebrew behind his name reminds us that Yahweh is God. The purpose of his book is straightforward: warn the people about coming judgment and encourage them to repent so they might again live under God's blessing.

In the Old Testament God made things plain: Deuteronomy 28 — blessing follows obedience; curse follows disobedience. The people did not experience the blessing they should have, and judgment came in the form of locusts — a devastating blow in an agricultural culture. Joel opens with a graphic picture of devastation: locusts that cut, swarm, lick, hop, and destroy. The prophet says, “Tell your children, and let your children tell their children,” because this devastation will be remembered for generations (Joel 1:1–4).

Joel 2 sounds the alarm: “Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain; let

all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near" (Joel 2:1). Judgment is coming — and Joel's message is both warning and call to repentance.

He says this: "Yet even now, declares the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; rend your hearts and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and he relents over disaster" (Joel 2:12–13). That's a rich reminder of God's gracious, long suffering heart.

Make no mistake — judgment is real. But God is willing to forgive. Joel says, don't rationalize your sin; repent now. Don't put it off until next week. Stop blaming others and own your sin. Return — literally turn back — like the prodigal who "arose and came to his father." Rend your hearts; tear your heart loose from the sin that binds you. Psalm 51:17 tells us God loves a broken and contrite heart.

Repentance is not religious gymnastics. It's seeing sin the way God sees it and feeling what God feels about it. Until you see what God sees, you won't feel what God feels. Respond to the Lord's prompting today — don't delay.

Jerry Green:

Thanks, Todd. Before we go to a couple of questions, let me remind our friends that Faith Made Simple is a free ministry — you can participate by subscribing and sharing on social media, and leaving a comment and a rating helps us too. This month's topic strikes at the heart of pride — a tough one. What keeps us from repenting?

Todd Smith:

Sin delivers what it promises: immediate gratification. If it didn't, we wouldn't keep doing it. Sometimes we simply enjoy our sin — and that's tragic, especially when that sin put the Son of God on the cross. Pride is a major part of the problem: we rationalize, justify, and rationalize again. We have short memories; we forget that sin's pleasure is temporary and its pain follows. But Joel offers hope: if you repent and return, God promises restoration. Joel 2:25 says God will restore the years the swarming locust has eaten. God is good at restoration — and there is far greater, lasting joy in restoration than in continuing to sin.

Jerry Green:

Thanks, Todd. That brings us to the end of this episode of season eight. Lord willing, we'll be back next week with another podcast. We wouldn't sign off without inviting you to visit Crossroads Community Church in Valencia, California, where God's Word is taught verse by verse. For more information about the podcast or the church, visit FaithMadeSimple.net. On behalf of Todd and the team here at Faith Made Simple, we look forward to our next visit. Until then, live blessed by being a doer of God's Word.