

## Even Now

### Opening Announcements:

- Happy Veterans Day!
- Connection Card - Don't forget to let us know you were here!
- Annual Voter's Meeting - Nov 22, following 2nd Service. There will be a Food Truck ([www.12basketskitchen.com](http://www.12basketskitchen.com)). AND, we will have Zoom participation AND voting! Join us!
- "The Christmas Experience" begins NEXT Sunday 11/15. This is a Right Now Church wide event during Christian Growth that will set up Christmas!

### Opening Prayer

Q: Have you ever had the experience where you needed to "return" to God? What was that like?

Q: Have you ever felt like "returning to the Lord" was impossible? Why?

Q: What are some of the obstacles, barriers, reasons people give for not "returning to the Lord"?

**READ: Joel 2:12-13** <sup>12</sup> "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; <sup>13</sup> and 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. "

Q: According to verse 12, how does the Lord desire we "return"?

Q: What happens when someone apologizes to us yet we know it's not sincere, 1/2 hearted, "fake"?

Q: How can we know we're "returning" "with all our heart"?

A: **READ: Psalm 139:23-24** "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!"

Q: How is this prayer helpful in answering the "all your heart issue"?

Q: What does "fasting and weeping and mourning" have to do with "returning"?

Q: According to verse 13, Gos invites us to “rend our hearts”. What does THAT mean?

Q: According to verse 13, “How” IS God? How does this help us “return”?

A: **READ: Psalm 103:10** “He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.”

Q: How does this reaffirm verse 13 above? Also, how have you seen this to be true in your life?

Q: What does this do for you emotionally when you think of God and your relationship with Him?

Q: How does that help you in living for His glory? Does it make it easier to obey and live out of love for Him vs obligation?

Q: Why is the Gospel more powerful and effective than the Law?

**READ: Matthew 22:37-40** ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Q: Why did Jesus say that “love” was the fulfillment of “the law and prophets”? Why not effort or trying hard or perfection?

Q: How does Jesus’ answer to this religious lawyer also line up with the Joel 2 passage?

Q: How can we “love” Jesus more?