Joel, Acts, and the Holy Spirit

March 16, 2025

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled Joel, Acts, and the Holy Spirit. Thank you to Paul, Rhonda, Don, and everyone else who made this service possible. The scripture reading is Joel 1:1 to 13.

Scripture Reading

Joel 1:1-13

I'll be reading from Joel 1, from 1 to 13.

The word of the Lord that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

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? Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation. What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.

Wake up, you drunkards, and weep! Wail, all you drinkers of wine; wail because of the new wine, for it has been snatched from your lips. A nation has invaded my land, a mighty army without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness. It has laid waste my vines and ruined my fig trees. It has stripped off their bark and thrown it away, leaving their branches white.

Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth grieving for the betrothed of her youth. Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the Lord. The fields are ruined, the ground is dried up; the grain is destroyed, the new wine is dried up, the olive oil fails.

Despair, you farmers, wail, you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed. 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.

Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come, spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God; for the grain offerings and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God.

Sermon

Joel, Acts, and the Holy Spirit

Good morning everyone. You get religion here and comedy so it's good. [Dance like David!] Dance like David, that's right.

In God's faithfulness lies eternal security. The prophet Joel sees this massive locust plague and severe drought devastating Judah, Israel, and he calls it a dreadful day. He describes the grasshoppers, the locusts, as the Lord's army and sees in their coming a reminder of the day of the Lord that it is near. Joel is what we would call a revivalist preacher in that he wants the Lord's people to repent and to turn back to him and the Lord says that restoration and blessing will come only after their judgment. Sometimes, and I think

it's true for all of us, sometimes we have to go through trouble before good things start going our way. He criticizes the priests for withholding the service of the Lord. We want to be faithful to God because he's faithful to us. So in Joel chapter 2, I think it's around verse 28, he says this and I think that you'll know these words. "I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams. Your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my love. I will show wonders and I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

And then these words, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." How do you like the sermon so far? "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And I don't know about you, but that's one of my favorite passages in all of the Bible. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Have you called on the name of the Lord? "For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, there will be deliverance. The Lord has said among the survivors whom the Lord calls that even in terrible times, God is at work for all of us. And the Lord says to his people, "Even now, return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate. He's slow to anger. He's abounding in love.

Be faithful to the Lord and do not make your inheritance an object of scorn. Rather, welcome people to the Lord." And then concerning inheritance, "My people Israel, they are scattered. My people among the nations and divided up the land of the Lord. Therefore, proclaim among the nations," and you'll remember these words, "and beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears. Judah will be inhabited forever. The Lord dwells in Zion." Now I don't know that there's a place actually called Zion, but Zion means God's presence, heaven and earth coming together. And even now, all generations later, this fulfillment of Joel's words in the book of Acts and the Apostle Peter declares loudly to the people that many people with different languages, yet hearing the Lord's message. As Peter is declaring these words from Joel and declaring these words for Peter, they're wondering what it all means. And so here's what happens.

Peter stands up and says these words, "In these last days, God said I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy. They will preach. They will declare the message of the Lord. They will live the message of the Lord. For us today, it is still true. I will pour out my Spirit on these days and prophesy. I will show wonders on the earth below, God says. And then with strong words, he says, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And so I could just see standing there listening to these words and seeing smoke and seeing blood. And what does all of this mean? Well, he says this, everyone, no matter what you see, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. My question, have you called on the name of the Lord? Way back in the Old Testament, Joel, in the New Testament, Peter. And you know what they say? The same thing.

Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man credited by God with miracles, wonders and signs, which he did among you as you yourselves know. He was handed over to God set purpose and foreknowledge and you with the help of wicked men put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, for it was impossible for him. It would be impossible for him. This man, Jesus, was handed over to you by God's set purpose, but raised from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, for it was impossible, impossible for death to keep us cold on him. All of us will die and all of us will live again eternally. God has never made a promise that hasn't come

true. And then he sees something that we can experience. I saw the Lord always in front of me. Can we do that? He says, I'll not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad. My tongue rejoices.

My body will also live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life and you will fill me with joy in your presence. You see, when Jesus died, he rose again. And when we die, we will be raised again. Just think of the promise of God. Has God ever made a promise and backed away from it? The promise of, I will be with you always. It will happen for each of us to look into the eyes of God. He knows you. He knows us. Look into the eyes of Jesus. Look at the Holy Spirit and look at all of our loved ones whom we will see again. My body will rejoice. I guess so. Nor will you let your holy one see our decay. You have made known to me the paths of life and you will fill me with joy in your presence. And maybe we can remember to do that. The joy of Jesus being with us. And I know we have bad days. And we have bad nights. And I know that we have difficulties. But the promise of God remains. I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. I am always with you. And we, as promised by God, will see our loved ones again.

See, in the Israel, it says, "God made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." And then when the people heard these things, they were cut to the heart. They were just, it grabbed them. And said to Peter and the other apostles, "So what do we do with all of this?" And Peter declares, "Repent, be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit. And this promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, generations to come, all whom the Lord will call." Who does he call? For those who call on the name of the Lord. And then later in verse 41, he says, "Those that accept that the message were baptized and abounding success because some 3,000 people were baptized." Now, I'm not sure that 3,000 people were baptized in one day. That'd be a lot of baptisms. But overall, some 3,000 people were baptized and they continued together and they met in various places, in homes, in temple courts, and they shared food together. And the Lord added to their fellowship daily.

And then it says, "And all the believers were united. They were united in heart. They were united in mind. There were no needy people because they all shared together." So then in Acts chapter 6, it says, "In those days, the number of believers increased day after day in the temple courts and from house to house. They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ." And then in verse 7, it says, "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples increased rapidly and a large number of priests, preachers became obedient to the faith. And the church throughout was strengthened and encouraged by the Lord's Holy Spirit and it continually grew in number." They really didn't know where to put everyone. So many people coming together, but they shared with each other. They ate with one another. They got to know one another. They loved one another. And then there were great elders and teachers and preachers who shared with them so that they could share with others.

And then the apostle Paul proclaimed these words, "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. He's not served by human hands. For in him," listen to this, "we live. For in him we live and we move and we have our very being. Without him we're not here." And then he says, "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. This is the promise given by God to us." And so the apostle Paul, I think with this large smile, wherever he went, continued preaching the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who believed. And then in Acts chapter 28, the last words were boldly and without hindrance.

Paul preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. And so I have on my notes, lastly, and I crossed it out. And then I put it back again. Well, it is the last and I crossed it out because it never stops. It never stops. "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us die to ourselves alone." Our death is not abandonment. Our death is closing an eye, opening an eye, and seeing the face of Jesus. None of us live to self alone. None of us die to self. If we live, we live to the Lord. If we die, we belong to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. How many promises does God give to us? Overflowing blessings of God.

So let me finish with these words. At the conclusion of Paul and his words are these. "Now to him who was able to establish you by the gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings for long ages past to the only wise God, be glory forever through Jesus Christ." And he says, "Amen." And I want to say it's an amen that's continuous. Amen. There's the promise over and over and over again. I'll never leave you. I'll never forsake you. I am with you always. Even until the end and when the end comes is not the end. We go to see him face to face. Our loved ones face to face. One of these days, one of these days, all of these blessings will be ours.

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