



The Prophecy
of Joel.

The Call to Repent and Hope



CHRIST COMMUNITY
CHURCH
Changed Hearts. Changed Lives. Changed Community.

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Introduction

The call to lament our sin in repentance and hope in the steadfast love and faithfulness of God in restoration can feel like a paradoxical call. How are we to lament what we presently see and sin's apparent impact on the future while, at the same time, holding in tension the hope that we have in God's sovereignty and goodness that we don't fully see at present to bring the story of this world to a redeemed conclusion? This struggle ruptures out of the words of **Psalm 137** as the Psalmist cries, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?". The Prophecy of Joel calls us into this tension between repentance born of grief over our sin and hope that emanates from the steadfast love and faithfulness of God as Father.

The details concerning who Joel was and the surrounding circumstances of the letter prove scant. Joel's name means "the Lord is God," and the only other specific detail is his father's name, Pethuel, of which we know nothing about. The proposed dates for the letter range from 900 BC to 500 BC for a variety of reasons beyond the scope of this devotional. The lack of specific details in terms of people, places, and events make the dating of the prophecy virtually impossible.¹ Given the mention of the priests in **1:13** and Judah and Jerusalem in **chapter 3**, O. Palmer Robertson concludes that the Southern Kingdom would have been the primary audience.² Raymond Dillard proposes that the lack of historical material was intentional so that it could be used as "a liturgical text intended for repeated use on occasions of national lament or at least a historical example of one such lament."³ This has been how the people of God have used Joel on occasion throughout history as a reminder and cultivator of repentance and hope.

The compositional beauty and flow of Joel supports its liturgical use for worship and as a means of discipleship in balancing the grief of repentance with the joy of hope in the Lord.⁴ David Allan Hubbard observes that the prophecy is "clearly fashioned with material from Judah's liturgical literature," however, "(it) is not itself a liturgy but a call to participate in one

¹ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah: Word Biblical Commentary, Vol. 31* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 226.

² O. Palmer Robertson, *Prophet of the Coming Day of the Lord: The Message of Joel* (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1995), 9.

³ Raymond Dillard, "Joel" in *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, ed. by Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1992), 243.

⁴ See **The Liturgical Structure of Joel** on p. 6 and **The Perspectival Structure of Joel** on p. 7 to see 2 of the ways the composition of the prophecy points to its use, meaning, and beauty.

(1:2-2:17) accompanied by a record of what happens when the people do (2:18-3:21).⁵ Stuart proposes that **Joel 1-2** were fashioned after the words of the liturgical song spoken by Moses in **Deuteronomy 32:1-43**.⁶ The prophet Joel sought to anchor the sinful, suffering people of God in the hope of the historical truths of God in an attempt to get them to turn their eyes from the things of the earth and look to where their help truly comes from. The prophet's words seek to mature its hearers in both lamentation and repentance over sin as well hope in the redemptive judgment and justice of God who will deliver His people from sin and death in the Day of the Lord. As Hubbard recognizes, "[t]he relationship between the two halves of the book should be read in terms of growth and development as well as parallelism and symmetry."⁷ The kind discipline of the Lord should lead us to a joyous repentance firmly founded on and supportive of our hope in His grace and mercy, slowness to anger, and abundant steadfast love and faithfulness in forgiveness and justice. Pray for our congregation to grow in the depths of our repentance of our sins and the heights of our hope in God who will make all things new in Christ!

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from **the Psalms** which will help us to see the hope-filled fruit of our lamentation of and repentance from our sin. We will confess together each week a confession from **Joel 2:12-13** for the first half of the series that calls us to lament and repent. For the second half, we will confess **Joel 3:17-21** to focus our hearts on the hope of God's deliverance of His people. Our assurances of pardon for **Joel 1:1-2:17** will come from **the Gospel of Luke** to assure us of the eternal results and benefits of our repentance. For the sermons from **Joel 2:18-3:21**, we will turn to **Paul's Letter to the Romans** to be affirmed in our call to hope in Christ and His promise to make all things new. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from **Revelation 21:3-4** to remind us of the blessings that will come with the Day of the Lord when Christ returns. The goal of these various elements is to show us that lamentation that leads to repentance serves to ignite our hope in God's love displayed in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Given that liturgy aids in the work and cultivation of discipleship, this devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for the various missionaries, church plants, and missional ministries that we support at

⁵ David Allan Hubbard, *Joel & Amos: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove: Inter-varsity Press, 1989), 28.

⁶ Stuart, 228.

⁷ Hubbard, 33.

CCC through Faith Promise. We also have the opportunity to pray on Saturday for God to draw various people near in worship to hear and experience His unchanging love for their joy and peace both now and in eternity. If we have the Lord's Table or a Baptism, then we will prepare to receive this evidence of His unwavering love for us in Christ. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we will pray for the means of grace to bear specific fruit in our lives. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in knowing God's unchanging love and living in a way that reflects our gratitude and His glory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

The Liturgical Structure of Joel

Lamentation and the Call to Repent:

- 1:1-12: The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on the Land
- 1:13-20: The Call to External Lamentation and Repentance
- 2:1-11: The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on His People
- 2:12-17: The Call to Internal Lamentation and Repentance

Restoration and the Call to Hope:

- 2:18-27: The Declaration of God's Restoration of the Land
- 2:28-32: The Declaration of God's Restoration of His People
- 3:1-8: The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on the Nations, Part 1
- 3:9-16: The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on the Nations, Part 2
- 3:17-21: The Declaration of God's Restoration of Judah

The Perspectival Structure of Joel

The Perspective from the Earth	The Perspective from <i>Zion / Heaven</i>
The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on the Land: 1:1-14	The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on <i>His People:</i> 2:1-11
The Call to External Lamentation and Repentance: 1:13-20	The Call to <i>Internal</i> Lamentation and Repentance: 2:12-17
The Declaration of God's Restoration of the Land: 2:18-27	The Declaration of God's Restoration of <i>His People:</i> 2:28-32
The Pronouncement of God's Judgment on the Nations: 3:1-16	The Declaration of God's <i>Restoration of Judah:</i> 3:17-21

Sermon Schedule

Date	Call ^{to} Worship	Assurance ^{of} Pardon	Benediction	Sacrament
Sunday, 9/15: <i>Joel 1:1-12</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 142	<i>Luke</i> 5:27-31	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	
Sunday, 9/22: <i>Joel 1:13-20</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 6	<i>Luke</i> 15:1-7	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	<i>Baptism</i>
Sunday, 9/29: <i>Joel 2:1-11</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 77	<i>Luke</i> 15:8-10	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	
Sunday, 10/6: <i>Joel 2:12-17</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 51	<i>Luke</i> 15:11-32	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
Sunday, 10/13: <i>Joel 2:18-27</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 126	<i>Romans</i> 3:19-26	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	
Sunday, 10/20: <i>Joel 2:28-32</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 30	<i>Romans</i> 5:1-11	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	<i>The Lord's Table</i>
Sunday, 10/27: <i>Joel 3:1-8</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 20	<i>Romans</i> 8:18-25	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	
Sunday, 11/3: <i>Joel 3:9-16</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 52	<i>Romans</i> 8:31-39	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	
Sunday, 11/10: <i>Joel 3:17-21</i>	<i>Psalm</i> 144	<i>Romans</i> 15:8-13	<i>Revelation</i> 21:3-4	<i>The Lord's Table</i>

Weekly Congregational Confessions

Lamentation ^{for the} Sermons ^{from} Joel 1:1-2:17:

Abba Father, Help us in the power of the Holy Spirit to return to You with all our heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and to rend our hearts and not our garments. Receive us Lord our God, for You are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and You relent over disaster.

Confession ^{from} Joel 2:12-13

Hope Declared ^{for the} Sermons ^{from} Joel 2:18-3:21:

Heavenly Father, Roar from Zion, and utter Your voice from Jerusalem, to make the heavens and earth quake so that You would be known. Be our refuge and stronghold in this fallen world. Make us holy for Your glory. Transform strangers and enemies into family members who dwell together with You through the blood of Christ. Remind us of the victory and reign of Jesus Christ at whose name every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord when He comes to make all things new.

Confession ^{from} Joel 3:17-21

The Week of September 15th

Monday, 9/9: *Psalm 142*: Reflect on a time when you cried out to the Lord in repentance of and lamentation for your sin and life in a fallen world. What were the merciful and gracious ways in which He responded?

Tuesday, 9/10: *Luke 5:27-31*: How did Jesus call you out of your sin into repentance? Who could you share this story with this week that Jesus may also be calling out of their sin into repentance?

Wednesday, 9/11: Pray for the Larsens serving with NEXT through MTW to help teach the coming generations world-wide of repentance in Christ so as to be restored to their Abba Father.

Thursday, 9/12: *Joel 1:1-12*: Pray for Christ Community to grow in repentance of and lamentation for the destructive effects of our sins in a fallen world.

Friday, 9/13: *Revelation 21:3-4*: What blesses you most about this description of Christ's return to restore and make all things new?

Saturday, 9/14: Pray for the Lord to call people to worship tomorrow who will be drawn to true repentance by His revealed kindness in Christ.

Sunday, 9/15: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to call us to repentance and to works in keeping with repentance for God's glory.

The Week of September 22nd

Monday, 9/16: *Psalm 6:* Give thanks to the Lord for a time when He dealt graciously with you as you cried out to Him as you languished in your sin.

Tuesday, 9/17: *Luke 15:1-7:* Imagine the celebration that broke in heaven when you who were once lost were pursued and found by Christ. Who would you love to see found by Christ resulting in celebrations in both in heaven and on earth?

Wednesday, 9/18: Pray for those who serve at the Women's Extension to help the residents know that sin doesn't have the final say in their lives as Christ pursues them for reconciliation.

Thursday, 9/19: *Joel 1:13-20:* What does your grief over your sin look like outwardly? Which means of grace help you to lament your sin and take joy in being restored to God in Christ?

Friday, 9/20: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Praise God for His desire to bless us eternally with His loving presence.

Saturday, 9/21: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Baptism of Genesis Blackman. Give thanks for the resurrection of Christ in which we will rise to newness of life for eternity.

Sunday, 9/22: *The Lord's Day Sabbath^D with Baptism:* Pray for the means of grace to assure us of who we are in Christ and equip us to walk in resurrected newness of life between the now and the not yet.

The Week of September 29th

Monday, 9/23: *Psalm 77*: In times of trouble, where do you seek help? Why do you seek it from there particularly?

Tuesday, 9/24: *Luke 15:8-10*: Meditate on how Christ searched for you when you were lost or is searching for someone you love who is lost. Give thanks for God's grace being more persistent than sin's insatiable, destructive hunger.

Wednesday, 9/25: Pray for the Stocks serving with MTW in Southeast Asia to have opportunities to call people to Christ so as to endure the Day of the Lord with joy in salvation.

Thursday, 9/26: *Joel 2:1-11*: Who can endure the Day of the Lord?

Friday, 9/27: *Revelation 21:3-4*: Praise God for the finished work of Christ that gives us joy in His presence in the Day of the Lord.

Saturday, 9/28: Pray for the Lord to draw people to worship who need to grieve the cost of their sin and bear the fruit of repentance in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone.

Sunday, 9/29: *The Lord's Day Sabbath*: Pray for the means of grace to reveal God's kindness in Christ that leads us to repentance in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Week of October 6th

Monday, 9/30: *Psalm 51:* What does God take delight in? How often does your repentance with a broken and contrite heart cause the Lord to delight in you?

Tuesday, 10/1: *Luke 15:11-32:* Which person do you most identify with in this story? Why? Note the father's pursuit of both sons and hospitable invitation to the same party.

Wednesday, 10/2: Pray for Byron Johnson with Vision 9:38 to equip and send missionaries to call sinners around the world to repent and be restored to God who loves them in Christ.

Thursday, 10/3: *Joel 2:12-17:* Take time to meditate on each of the characteristics of God from verse 13. Give thanks specifically for the ways you've experienced Him uniquely through each of these.

Friday, 10/4: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Give praise to God for the day on which all lamentation and weeping will give way to eternal joy and celebration in worship.

Saturday, 10/5: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks to God for Christ being rent so that our hearts could be made whole in Him.

Sunday, 10/6: *The Lord's Day Sabbath* with *The Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to lead us to return to the Lord with broken and contrite hearts knowing we are forgiven in Christ.

The Week of October 13th

Monday, 10/7: *Psalm 126:* Reflect on a time your mouth was filled with laughter and your tongue shouted for joy because of God's restoration. Share this someone this week.

Tuesday, 10/8: *Romans 3:19-26:* Give thanks to God for putting Christ forward for your sins as the propitiation (or payment) that you received by faith to reveal His righteousness in your redemption.

Wednesday, 10/9: Pray for the Robertsons serving through MTW in South America to support and plant churches as God's restorative provision of Christ in various nations.

Thursday, 10/10: *Joel 2:18-27:* What are some ways in which God has restored to you some of the things that have been taken away or lost as a result of sin and His disciplining love?

Friday, 10/11: *Revelation 21:3-4:* What are you most hopeful for in the return of Christ when He will usher in the New Heavens and Earth?

Saturday, 10/12: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw those who desperately need to hear the hope of restoration in Christ.

Sunday, 10/13: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the means of grace to reveal what God is restoring to us that is greater than what we've lost due to the cost of sin.

The Week of October 20th

Monday, 10/14: *Psalm 30:* Reflect on how God has and is healing you by delivering you from the power of sin and death in Christ. Share this someone this week.

Tuesday, 10/15: *Romans 5:1-4:* What are some ways in which your suffering and God's work in Christ have produced in you a hope that does not put you to shame?

Wednesday, 10/16: Pray for the Caltons serving with RUF at KSU to bear fruit from declaring God's restoration in Christ and hope for students to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Thursday, 10/17: *Joel 2:28-32:* What event is this passage pointing forward to? Why is it important for God's people to hope for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Friday, 10/18: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Imagine what life in the New Heavens and Earth will be like based on this description. What most excites you about what is to come?

Saturday, 10/19: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God's provision of the Holy Spirit following the ascension of Christ.

Sunday, 10/20: *The Lord's Day Sabbath* ^{with} *The Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to fill us afresh with the Holy Spirit and the hope of the Gospel.

The Week of October 27th

Monday, 10/21: *Psalm 20:* Who's salvation has or would cause you to shout for joy and share it with others?

Tuesday, 10/22: *Romans 8:18-25:* What most causes you to groan and long for the fullness of redemption? What do you most hope for that you don't currently see?

Wednesday, 10/23: Pray for Grace Potter serving as an intern with RUF at KSU to help students grow in their hope in the fullness of redemption in Christ.

Thursday, 10/24: *Joel 3:1-8:* Give thanks for God's just judgment against evil and wicked injustices against His image bearers.

Friday, 10/25: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Meditate on the blessing of the removal of all sin and associated sorrow in the Day of the Lord.

Saturday, 10/26: Pray that God would draw those who need to know of His justice for them against sin and death in Christ.

Sunday, 10/27: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the means of grace to help us to hope in God's pending justice in the Day of the Lord.

The Week of November 3rd

Monday, 10/28: *Psalm 52:* What are the ways in which God has revealed His steadfast love for you in the various circumstances of your life?

Tuesday, 10/29: *Romans 8:31-39:* How is the victory of Christ and love of God affecting how you live your life?

Wednesday, 10/30: Pray for Mwamba Johnson serving with Vision Collegiate Ministries to bear fruit through the proclamation of God's justice in and through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Thursday, 10/31: *Joel 3:9-16:* What serves as your hopeful refuge in times of trouble and difficulty?

Friday, 11/1: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Praise God for the blessed hope that we have in Him as our eternal refuge and stronghold.

Saturday, 11/2: Pray for the Lord to bring those who seek refuge in other than the Lord and that they would come to know Him as their stronghold in Christ.

Sunday, 11/3: *The Lord's Day Sabbath:* Pray for the means of grace to remind us of our refuge in Christ alone by faith alone through God's grace alone.

The Week of November 10th

Monday, 11/4: *Psalm 144:* Give thanks to the Lord for rescuing and delivering you from sin and death in Christ. Share your story of rescue and deliverance with someone this week.

Tuesday, 11/5: *Romans 15:8-13:* Are you growing in your hope in the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

Wednesday, 11/6: Pray for First Care Women's Clinic in Marietta to see lives transformed by the hope that they offer in Christ in both word and deed through the services offered.

Thursday, 11/7: *Joel 3:17-21:* What does the person and work of Christ teach you about who God is and what He's like?

Friday, 11/8: *Revelation 21:3-4:* Who will you be blessed to see present in the presence of the Lord at the return of Christ?

Saturday, 11/9: Take time to read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Give thanks for God revealing His love for you through the death and resurrection of Christ who has gone to prepare a place for you.

Sunday, 11/10: *The Lord's Day Sabbath* with *The Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to help us to know more fully God's love for us in Christ.