

Joel 2:12-17

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[0:00] Good evening. Good evening. Turn with me if you would to the Old Testament.! Turn with me if you would to the Old Testament. It's got a lot of judgment in it.

It's got a lot of wrath in it. It's got a lot of anger in it. And all that wrath and that anger and that judgment is coming from God. What people many times fail to realize is that that wrath and that judgment and that anger from God is not toward the heathen.

He's talking to His own people in this book. He's talking to His own. He's talking to His chosen. He's talking to the apple of His eye in this book.

Joel chapter 1 talks about a plague of locusts that's come upon the land, come upon the entire nation really. And it's devoured everything.

It's devoured the crops. It's devoured the vineyards. It's barked the trees and barked the vines. All these locusts have come in and caused much destruction.

[1:30] So much destruction that there's no offering that's left for God. And it talks about the drunkards crying and howling.

It talks about the farmers or the husbandmen doing likewise. The husbandmen howling and whine and cry because the crops have failed or been eaten up for that matter.

And the drunkard does so because there's no more vineyard to produce wine. And they're crying over new wine, which is a little more than grape juice.

So there's nothing for the drunkard to have there. There's nothing for the husbandmen to gather. And because of all these things, the animals, they have nothing to eat.

If they can't eat anything, they're all going to die. So there's no chance to have a meat offering. There's no chance to have a drink offering. There's no chance to have a grain offering. None of these things.

[2:35] And you find all this in the first chapter of Joel. The second chapter of Joel is kind of a continuation. Now some people think that this is just a prophecy of an invading army against Israel.

But folks, there is no language in the second chapter of Joel that explicitly says that we've deviated from the locust plague. So the locust plague continues.

Now it says that they are like men. It says that they're like this and like that. But there's nothing that says that we've gone from insects to men.

Now, that being said, there's many times in Scripture where one thing will be being described that can happen again into the future. And that very well could be the case here.

I'll let you be the decider of that in your own studies of the book of Joel. I'm not going to tell you one way or another because, again, Scripture does not explicitly state what the case is.

[3:37] But I can tell you for certain that there is no language that says we have moved from locusts to men in the second chapter of Joel. The 11th verse of the second chapter of Joel ends with a thunderous question from Almighty God.

The 11th verse in the second chapter of Joel reads, And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army, for His camp is very great, for He is strong that executeth His word.

For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it? That is an awesome question from an awesome God. And we can answer that real quick line.

Who can abide it? Absolutely no one. Except those that be in Christ. In the New Testament age that we are in now, for the past 2,000 or so years, we know that those that abide in Christ can abide in the day of God's judgment.

Because we are in Christ. Because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We are clothed in the work of Christ. Not our own works. Not our own righteousnesses. So, we know that question. [4:54] But again, God is asking this question in verse 11 to His own people. He makes a statement. And He talks about the day of the Lord. And how great it is.

And how terrible it is. And this brings us to another thing. I have heard people say, I've had people tell me, I cannot wait for the great day of the Lord. And they don't have an understanding of what the great day of the Lord is.

The Scripture here says that it's darkness. And it's gloominess. You find that in the second chapter of Joel. It's not the day of rapture.

It's not the day of God taking us home. It is a day of destruction. And it is a day of judgment. And I make sure to correct people when they tell me that. And I've had two or three people over the years tell me, I cannot wait for the great day of the Lord.

I'm like, I dread it for everybody else. Not for myself, because I'm saved. But I dread it for those that are left. I dread it for them. And I weep for them.

[5:55] And I mourn for them. And I pray for them. But again, in verse 11, God makes the statement that the day of the Lord is great and very terrible.

Who can abide it? And that brings us into the passage that we'll be in tonight, verses 12 through 17. So, Joel chapter 2, beginning at verse 12, says, Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God.

For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him, even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God?

Blow the trumpet and sign. Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation. Assemble the elders. Gather the children.

And those that suck the breast. Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.

[7:19] Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God? Verse 12 again, Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.

This verse here begins with a very important word, therefore, which puts us back to Joel chapter 2 and to Joel chapter 1, what we briefly summarized before we started here tonight, but he says, Therefore, so he's saying, in light of all of this, in light of this judgment that's come upon the land, and in light of the judgment that is coming upon the land, in light of this invasion, whether it be insects, whether it be men, in light of all of this, therefore, in light of all this, therefore, also now.

There's two real important words there. Therefore, which puts us in the light of the judgment that has come, and the judgment that has been pronounced upon God's people, upon Israel.

And he says, Therefore, also now. He doesn't tell them, you wait until the locusts have left, you wait until this plague has been lifted, you wait until your circumstances are a little bit better.

He says, Therefore, also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart. He says, Therefore, also now turn ye even to me.

[8:42] Don't turn to your neighbor. Don't turn to your synagogue. Don't turn to this or to that. You turn unto me. Don't turn to the tabernacle. Don't turn to the priest.

He says, You turn even unto me. And folks, we live in a time, and right now, and an age right now, where people will turn to anyone, and everyone, I'm talking about Christians.

I'm talking about people that have been saved. People that have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. And they will turn unto anyone. They'll go to their pastor. They'll go to a deacon. They'll go to a Sunday school teacher.

They'll go to anyone outside of God. And God says, Turn even unto me. We put too much faith in man.

Folks, don't put your faith in me. I promise you, I will let you down. Sooner or later, it may not happen today. It may not happen tomorrow, or next week, but I promise you, at some point down the right road, I will let you down.

[9:41] But Almighty God will not let His own down. Almighty God will always be with His people. He will always do what's best for His people. Turn unto Him, and not unto man.

Amen. God says, Therefore, also now. Therefore, in light of everything, Christians, I tell you now, in light of all of your circumstances, right now, in light of all your situations, no matter how good, no matter how bad they are, right now, now, now, is the accepted time.

Now, is the day of salvation. God says, turn to Him now. Turn to God. Even unto God. With all of your situations, and all of your circumstances.

I'm not saying you can't come to me and ask me to pray. That's not what I'm saying. But folks, go to God first. Go to God first. He's the one that saved your soul. He's the one that sent His Son that you could have salvation, and that you could even have access unto Him.

When the veil in the temple was written plain from the top to the bottom, folks, that signified access for all who would come to God in faith and repentance. We have our own access to God through our great high priest, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[10:59] Hallelujah. Why do we waste our time going to man? Why do we waste our time doing that? Again, I'm not saying don't come to me with questions. I'm not saying don't come to me asking me for prayer.

And I hope that you wouldn't say that to me. But we need to go to God first. First. God says, Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart.

He is calling His people to repentance. This is why the plague entered the land anyway. This is why the locusts were sent upon the land. This is why the crops failed.

This is why the trees and the vines were barked. This is why there was no wine. And this is why there was no offering for the priests to give in the tabernacle. It was a judgment of Almighty God upon His own people. If that doesn't show us, we need to turn to God more so than man. I don't know what will. Because God does send judgment.

[11:59] And God will send judgment. And He continues to send judgment. We talk about judgment all the time. We talk about judgment upon the heathen and upon the pagans and upon the unbelievers. But folks, God does and can and will send judgment upon His own people.

We're going to talk a little bit more about that a little bit further into this sermon. With all your heart. Folks, go with all your heart. This kind of renders into what Brother CJ brought up this morning. Amen. We've got some half-hearted Christians. I'm not necessarily saying here, but the church as a whole as half-hearted Christians. God says, turn even unto me with all your heart.

With all your heart. Not halfway. Not one foot in the world. One foot in the church. Not one hand in God's and one hand in the devil's. God wants it all.

He wants the whole person. He wants your whole body. He wants your whole soul. He wants your whole heart. And folks, there is no such thing as halfway repentance. Halfway repentance is no repentance at all.

[13:05] You must repent completely. You must repent totally. You must turn 180 degrees from whatever sin that it is and turn Godward. Amen. That's true repentance.

And that's what God is calling His people to here in this Scripture. Turning them to 100% repentance. He goes on in verse 13. He says, then rend your heart.

Rend your heart and not your garments. Again, folks, this is the custom, not just in ancient Israel, but it was a Far East custom all over the region over there.

When men had a lot of grief, when they had a lot of remorse, they would rend their garments. We read about it over and over in the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament. We read about people ripping their garments because of some kind of grief, because of some kind of horror that they had heard or that they had seen or because of something negative that had happened.

Men would rend their garments. And God here says, to rend your hearts, not your garments. Folks, repentance is not an outward show. And that's it. He's not talking about something that is theatrical here.

[14:15] Rending their garments is something that people did. Yes, but it does no good. It's no different than a person after a sermon coming to the altar and weeping and crying over their sin, but they leave out of the church and their heart is not moved.

It is untouched. It is not rent. It's no different than that. When God breaks a heart, folks, God breaks a heart. God knows what He's doing.

God doesn't try to do anything. When God breaks a heart, He breaks it. He doesn't try to break it. He does so. Just like people say all the time, God's trying to get their attention. He's trying to do this.

He's trying to do that. Folks, God doesn't try. God does. God does. God sends judgment and it gets people's attention. God sends blessing and it gets people's attention.

God doesn't try. He does. It's just like the book of Isaiah says. He says that His word will go forth and it shall not return void unto Him. It will accomplish that which God set it out to do.

[15:17] It will. It shall accomplish what He set it out to do. He doesn't try with His word. It doesn't. And it will either turn a sinner toward Him or it will push a sinner further away from Him.

But either way, there is a response to the word of Almighty God. Hallelujah. And rend your heart and not your garments. Church, I invite you to do the same thing.

Don't do just an outward show. Don't do just an outward show to God or to us or to your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ or to any other human being.

You rend your heart. Rend your heart. God says to turn to Him in verse 12. He says to turn with your whole heart. And here in verse 13, He says to rend your heart. Let your heart break for your sin.

And that's what will produce remorse. And that's what will produce repentance. Think about Isaiah in chapter 6. Isaiah saw the holiness of God there in the temple in the vision.

[16:17] He saw the holiness of God. And he heard the seraphim as they were flying around saying, Holy, Holy, Holy. But folks, he didn't say, Wow, I'm special that God let me see this. He didn't say, Wow this or wow that.

He said, Wow unto me. I'm a man of unclean lips and I dwell amongst the people of unclean lips. The holiness of God showed Him the ugliness of His own sin.

And anytime you compare your sin with the holiness and the righteousness of Almighty God, it will show you just how black and filthy and evil your sin is.

And that should drive you to repentance. Again, it will either drive you to repentance or it will drive you away from God. It will be one or the other. But either way, there's a response. There's a response.

And rend your heart and not your garment. And turn unto the Lord your God. Here he is saying, Turn. Turn unto the Lord your God. What does that mean? Here again in verse 12, he says, Turn ye even to me.

[17:17] Here he says, Turn unto the Lord. Listen to these words. Unto the Lord your God. Again, He is talking to His own people here. He couldn't have said that to the pagans.

He couldn't have said that to the heathens. He couldn't have said that to the Moabites or the Hittites or the Parasites or any other atts that we find in the Scripture. It was His people that He referred to as their God.

Amen. He says, Turn to the Lord your God. If he's saying turn twice, here in two different verses, Turn to God. Turn to me. What does that mean?

They had turned away from God. They were looking the other direction. They were looking at other gods. They were looking at other cultures. They were looking at other religions.

They were looking at other things. They were looking at the world. God says, Turn. Turn unto me. Turn even unto me. And turn unto the Lord your God.

[18:15] Folks, we are just as susceptible to turn our backs on God as these Israelites here were. We, as born-again Christians, we that have professed Jesus Christ, we that have been saved by His blood, we that have been regenerated by the very Spirit of Almighty God, are just as susceptible to turning our backs on God as these people here.

And God, the same call goes out to us as the New Testament church has went out to the Jewish nation. Turn unto me. Turn unto the Lord your God.

Why? Because we've turned away from Him. And the church, unfortunately in America, for the most part, has turned away from God. It has turned away from God.

They've turned toward entertainment. They've turned toward money. They've turned toward fame. They've turned toward a name. They've turned toward everything except for God.

And it's time that the church turns back to God. If not for God, folks, there would be no church. I ain't talking about Blessed Redeemer Baptist. I'm talking about the church of Jesus Christ.

[19:33] There would be no church if not for the infallible plan of Almighty God that was put in place before the foundation of the world was ever laid. If not for God, there would be no church.

There would be no sense in us congregating here tonight because there would be no salvation. There would be no reason for us to fellowship. There would be none of this. But for God, we have all those things and so much more.

And rend your hearts, not your garments. And turn unto the Lord your God. And He tells us why. Why should we turn to God? Why? He gives us the reason. Substitute that next word for with because.

Because it means the same thing. For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. That's why we turn to God.

Even though we're rebellious sinners. Even though, even though at some point in our life we've broken the laws of God and done it willingly.

[20:36] And done it wantingly. And somewhat enjoyed it. So we thought. Even though, God is still gracious. And God is still full of kindness.

And God is full of tender mercy. God is salvation. God is all of these things. But He says, for He is gracious. Turn unto Him. God says, turn unto Me.

Turn unto God. For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Now this doesn't mean that God's done anything that He needs to repent of.

No more so than it means in Genesis chapter 6 where it says that He repented God that He even made man. It doesn't mean that God had to repent of anything. God's never done any evil. He's never sinned. There's no need for Him to repent.

It just means that God may just stay the judgment. God may hold it off. For just a little while. And why would He do that?

[21:36] Because He is gracious. And because He is full of mercy. Folks, the not so immediate punishment of sin is not God's indifference to sin.

Sin must be punished. Because He is holy. And because He is righteous. It must be punished. But praise God, our sin, those of us that have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, our sin was placed upon Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary.

Our sin has been dealt with by Jesus Christ. Our sin has been dealt with by our Savior. But folks, just like these Israelites, Isaiah said, Isaiah said, all we like sheep have gone astray.

We have all turned unto our own ways. But praise be unto God. It says, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Hallelujah! He laid on the Lord your iniquity and my iniquity.

Your sin was placed on Him. Your filth was placed on Him. And Jesus took it all to the cross. And God dealt with sin there.

[22:45] That's why I cannot understand for the life of me, even though I was once in the boat, even though I was once in that other boat, for the life of me, I can't understand why people would choose to pay for their own sin for all of eternity when it has already been paid for 2,000 years ago.

And there is a land that is flowing with milk and honey. There is a land of perpetual bliss. There is a land where we have eternal communion in the physical presence of Jesus Christ that is awaiting all of those that have repented of their sin, repented of their unbelief, repented of their ways, and believe on the Gospel.

And people turn that down and say, I'd rather pay it myself. I don't understand it. I don't understand it. God help me to understand it.

But this is why we would turn unto God. This is why God is telling His people, His people, keep that in mind, to turn unto Him. Because He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.

Verse 14, Who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him, even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Boy, this sounds somewhat familiar for those of you that are familiar with the book of Jonah.

[24:09] Again, He says, Who knoweth if He will return and repent? Who knoweth? Who else said this? Jonah 3, the king of Nineveh said this very thing.

Y'all remember in Jonah 3 when Jonah goes into the city of Nineveh preaching, he says, Yet 40 days and God's going to bring down Nineveh. God will destroy Nineveh.

And what happened? The word got out to the people and the word eventually got to the king and the king called for a fast and the king called for repentance. The king himself sent his garments to the side and put on sackcloth.

And he commands the people to do the very same thing in all the city of Nineveh. A bunch of heathens. A bunch of pagans. A bunch of people that did not know the God of the Bible knew how to react to judgment.

And here's God having to instruct His own people how to react to judgment. But the king of Nineveh said this very thing. Who knows if God will repent?

[25:12] Folks, it is not good to presume upon the grace of Almighty God. Amen. And this verse when it says who knoweth if he will return and repent?

Who knows if he will do this? Who knows if he will stay in the judgment? Who knows if he will hold it back? But he held it back for the Ninevites. Unfortunately, about a hundred years later give or take, Nineveh was right back in the same boat that they were when Jonah preached.

And when they repented and God held off the judgment, the folks about a century later judgment came. The judgment that God promised came.

Again, God is not indifferent to sin. And just because God may have held off punishment for sin, He may have held off judgment, doesn't mean that judgment's not coming.

It does not mean that judgment's not coming. But God, God is long-suffering and God is patient.

And this call to repentance, folks, the amazing part of this, this expresses God's desire for people to repent.

[26:19] It's just like Peter says. Peter says, the Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The book of Acts says that at one time God winked at the ignorance of man.

It teaches God winked at the ignorance of man, but now commands men everywhere to repent. To repent. All men are given that call. We are all called to repentance.

Who knoweth if He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him? If He's called us to repent and we repent, then surely to goodness there's going to be a blessing of some kind.

But He tells us what the blessing is that God's going to leave behind. He says, and leave a blessing behind, even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God. Notice that's in the form of a question.

Who knows if He'll repent of this? Who knows if He'll keep the judgment away from us? But if He does, He just might leave a blessing behind. But what is that blessing?

[27:20] It wasn't a new car. It wasn't a palace for all, a palace of peace for all these Israelites. God's? It was not a material thing. He says, even a meat offering and a drink offering.

What is that saying? He will restore worship. That's what that's saying. Folks, the meat offering was for no other reason than to worship God.

The drink offering was for no other reason than to worship God. It was used in worship to God. It wasn't used for atonement. That's what the birth sacrifice was for.

We're talking about meat offerings. We're talking about grain offerings. We're talking about things used to worship Almighty God. And it says, who knows if God will repent.

And if He does, He'll leave a blessing behind. And if He leaves that blessing, we will be able to worship Him. I'll tell you right now, Christian, if you have unrepentant sin in your life, if you knowingly have sinned in the closet, have sinned under the rug, back in the dark corner somewhere, you cannot worship God until that sin is repented of.

[28:34] It's an impossibility for you to do that. It's an impossibility for me to do that with knowingly having unrepentant sin in my life. But God is calling His people here to repentance so that they can worship Him the way that He prescribed in the Scriptures to worship Him.

That's a great verse. Who knoweth that He will return and repent and leave a blessing behind Him. What do we think of as blessings? Health. Bills are paid. Food in the pantry.

Water coming out of the spigot. Toilets that flush. Lots when we flip the switch. And those are blessings. Don't you get me wrong. Those are blessings from God. The very air I'm breathing right now is a blessing from God.

Amen. But these people, God here is saying, I'll restore worship to you. Amen. I'll restore worship. What a blessing it is to worship our Savior.

What a blessing it is to worship our God. The God of the universe. The God that spoke everything into existence. He made every tree. He made every plant. He made every animal. He made every person.

[29:42] What a privilege it is to worship Him. Knowing that He could have chose anything and anyone else on planet earth. But He chose us as the crown deitum of His creation.

Praise God. Why would you not want to worship Him? And why would you leave sin unrepentant in your life that would hinder your worship of God? You might have that sin in your life.

And you might come to church and cut a big shine. You might come sing songs. You might run the aisles. You might raise hands. You might scream and shout. But if you have unrepentant sin, God does not recognize that worship.

Amen. What did David say? Psalm 51. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Listen, folks. This is a man that the Bible describes after God's own heart.

And after his sin with Bathsheba. Even though he was a murderer. Even though he was an adulterer. God still heard him. And God knew when he repented. When the prophet came to him and said, Thou art the man, David.

[30:54] But in Psalm 51, he says, Create in me a clean heart, O God. But he recognized. The psalmist recognized against Thee and Thee only have I sinned, O God.

He recognized that he had sinned. He said, Create in me a clean heart, O God. He wasn't wanting just his circumstances changed. He was wanting his heart renewed for God.

Not for himself. But for God. He said, Restore unto me the joy of my salvation. He didn't say restore unto me my salvation.

He said, The joy of my salvation. He had lost his joy. He wanted a clean heart so that he could have that joy back and so that he could worship God properly.

My goodness. He says, He might leave a blessing. Offerings. Worship Him. Worship Him, church.

[31:54] Worship Him. Verse 15, Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sanctify fast. Call a solemn assembly. Again, the first line, Blow the trumpet in Zion.

This is possibly the most amazing line in this passage of Scripture that we have read tonight. Blow the trumpet in Zion. I know we didn't read the first part of chapter 2.

But I'm going to read it right now. Verse 1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble. For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand.

And here, in verse 15, we see the same thing. Blow the trumpet in Zion. But folks, in verse 1, the blowing of the trumpet was announcing that there was an invasion coming.

It was an announcement that judgment was on the way. It was an announcement that God was angry and He was about to pour out His wrath upon the land and upon the people.

[32:53] But here, in this verse, the same trumpet, praise God, the same trumpet. He says, Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sanctify fast.

Call a solemn assembly. What have we been talking about in all of these verses? The same trumpet that was talking about judgment and warning about judgment in verse 1 is calling the people to repentance, which is a wonderful picture of the mercy and the grace of Almighty God. Hallelujah. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Where was Zion? That's where God's people dwell. Again, folks, we're talking about God's people in this Scripture.

Blow the trumpet in Zion. Praise God. This Bible tells us. This Bible tells us. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

That's verse 1 in chapter 2. But praise God, the Bible also teaches that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. That's this verse here that we just read.

[33:58] Verse 15. The same trumpet. We can talk about the Bible being a trumpet. The same trumpet that shows us that we are indeed condemned under the curse of Almighty God.

That we are indeed condemned unto the judgment and the wrath of God. For the Bible teaches that the wrath of God abideth upon the wicked. It abides upon all of those that have not repented of their ways, that have not believed the Gospel, that have not come into Christ and Christ into them.

The same trumpet. The same book here that shows us we are condemned also shows us how to be saved and it shows us that we are indeed saved.

When we are. There's a few things in the Scripture that can assure us of salvation. That can assure us that we are indeed saved.

Bow the trumpet and Zion. But this one isn't for warning. This one isn't for condemnation. This one isn't for judgment. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Sanctify a fast.

[35:03] And call a solemn assembly. Folks, not too awful long ago, I preached from 2 Chronicles in chapter 20. Y'all remember that? It ain't been too many Sunday nights ago. I preached from that. I preached from Jehoshaphat.

And the three invading armies were coming down upon God's people. And Jehoshaphat called for a fast among the people. He called for the people to pray unto God.

And he sought God. And folks, God delivered those people. He delivered the people of Judah. And that because they did what God expected of them.

And here, here in this verse, blow the trumpet in Zion. Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. That's exactly what Jehoshaphat did. And it worked.

What makes us think that when we come together as a corporate body, now listen, I understand repentance is personal.

[35:59] I can't repent for your sin. You can't repent for my sin. And I get that. But folks, we're talking about a corporate setting. God is calling the nation here. He is calling the entire nation to repentance.

Why was that? I'll tell you why. Because again, I just quoted it from Romans 3.23, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sin affects the entire body.

Sin affects the entire church. Sin affected the entire camp of Israel. Sin affects the world globally. Right.

And that's why it is a universal call to repentance. Again, I quoted from Acts just a little while ago that at one time God winked at man's ignorance but now commands men everywhere.

Not just in the nation of Israel. Not just in the church. Men everywhere. Right. To repent is a universal call but praise God the gospel is a universal call as well.

[37:03] When Jesus hung on that cross. When Jesus was there and they put the placard above His head and they wrote the inscription they wrote in three different languages there.

And that was so that anybody passing by could read who that was there on the cross. It was a universal sign for people that spoke many different languages of that day.

So that everyone would know this is Christ who claimed to be King of the Jews. Folks, the gospel is universal. It's not meant just for white people.

Unfortunately, there's some people that think that. It's not meant just for people that have been somewhat good in their life. Let me remind you the Bible says none are good. No, not one.

It's not just for those that have sought after God. I'll remind you again the Bible says there are none that seek effect of righteousness. No, not one. It is for those that have had their hearts broken by God.

[38:07] And they have seen their life or their sins in the light of God's holiness. And they have seen what a filthy creature that they are. They have seen how worthless that they are.

And God has said you might be worthless. You might be sinful. You might be rebellious. But praise God I commend my love toward men and that while you were yet sinners cross died for you.

Hallelujah. Amen. Christ died for the repentant and He died for all those that will believe in the Gospel. He died for sinners worldwide. All that is required is to come to God in faith and repentance.

That's all that's required. Baptism won't save you. Worship outward worship will not save you.

Church attendance will not save you.

You put a hundred grand in the coffin next Sunday that ain't going to save you. Faith in God and His Christ and repentance of your sin.

[39:10] That is what saves. Jesus said it Himself in Mark chapter 1. He said, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the Gospel.

Repent and believe the Gospel. God here says in verse 15, Blow the trumpet inside, sanctify fast. Call us all in the assembly. Verse 16, Gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation. Assemble the elders. Gather the children and those that suck the breast. Let the bridegroom go forth of His chamber and the bride out of her closet again. Folks, I've already touched on it once, but the reason that this call was going out to the elders, those with wisdom, those that had experience with God, and it was going out to the children as well, those that were just getting started, it was going out to the infants that were still sucking their mother's breast.

And it goes to the bride and the bridegroom who in Israeli tradition were required to come out into public service. It goes to everyone.

Amen. It goes to everyone because sin affected them all. Yeah. That's why it went to everyone.

Amen. And He tells them, Gather the people.

[40:22] Sanctify the congregation. Set them aside. Set them aside again in verse number 15. It says, a solemn assembly.

Folks, He wasn't calling the people to a joyful worship. It says, a solemn assembly. A solemn assembly.

Now listen, I ain't saying we come in here and we all sit around with sour faces. We ought to be happy that we're saved. And we ought to worship God. And we ought to act like we're saved.

We ought to act like we're worshiping God. I ain't saying you got to cut a shine every time you walk through the door. But folks, if we're redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, it ought to show on us. It ought to show on us. There ain't not one person out in this world should have to ask us if we are a Christian. Right. Yet, the world, the world will tell you exactly how a Christian is supposed to act.

[41:22] Yeah. But, ain't none of them should have to ask us if we're a Christian. It should show. It should show. It should show in our speech.

We shouldn't have filthy talk. It should show in our actions. We shouldn't go places that we shouldn't be going. It should show in our entertainment what we think. You laugh at certain off-color jokes. Shame on you. Shame on you if you're a child of God. Now, I understand the world will tempt you with such things. I get that. But folks, temptation is not sin.

Temptation is not sin. If that was the case, Christ would have sinned and Christ never sinned.

Temptation is not sin. Give in to the temptation. That's when it turns into sin. Gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation.

Again, He calls everybody. Assemble the elders, those with wisdom. Gather the children. Gather those that suck the breast. Let the bridegroom go forth of His chamber and the bride out of her closet.

[42:21] And again, in traditional Israel, newlyweds were not required to come out into public service.

But God's saying even the newlyweds, even they need to come. I'm not saying that's the Bible. I'm saying that was Israel's tradition. God says even they need to come.

Everybody needs to come. Why? Because everybody needs to repent. That's why. No other reason. If they want to worship God, if they want God to be able to be worshipped with the offerings that He prescribed in His book to worship Him with, they need to come and they need to repent. You read about the offerings, folks. Read Leviticus chapters 1-7 sometimes. You read about those offerings. The people. The people brought the offerings. The entire camp of Israel would bring their offerings.

There were certain offerings that were made by the priests only. There were certain offerings that the people brought themselves. But the priests are the ones that had to make the actual offering to God because they were the mediators between the Jews and God.

[43:36] The people would bring their offerings. But the priests had to mediate. Which gets us into the last verse here. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar.

And let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathens should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?

Let the priests, let the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar. saying, Let the ministers...

Now folks, don't you read this and say, it's the pastor's job to weep over sin. Now, pastors should, but the congregation should as well.

My Bible teaches me in the New Testament that we're all kings and priests. So this does not exempt you. Whether you be male, whether you be female, this does not exempt you.

[44:42] He says, Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar. Why between the porch and the altar? What was done at the altar? That's where sacrifice was made.

What was done at the porch? That's where the ministering took place. And God's telling the priests, you need to weep between those two places. Between the mediation and the sacrifice.

You need to weep. You need to mourn. You need to mediate. You need to intercess on behalf of the others. That's exactly what God is getting at here. But He says, and let them say, God tells them what to pray.

He tells them what to pray. Let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach that the heathens should rule over them. the main part of this is spare thy people, O Lord. God telling the priests to stand between the porch and to stand in the altar and to make mediation and intercession on behalf of God's people saying, Spare thy people, O Lord.

[45:57] How often are we doing that? Now we all pray for lost folks. At least I hope you do. How often do you pray for those that you know are saved or those that we at least think are saved?

None of us knows that the other one is saved or not and 100% sure. I hope y'all I hope y'all think that I'm saved. I'll tell you right now that I am.

But the only two people that knows that for 100% sure is me and God. And I don't know if we're 100% sure about you all. I know y'all give me a reason to think otherwise. I'm just saying.

But folks, how often do we pray for the church? Again, not Blessed Redeemer Baptist Church. The church as a whole. Spare thy people.

Spare thy people, O Lord. How often do we stand between the porch and the altar and we mourn over the sin not of the world, not of the pagans, folks.

[46:56] I've said it a hundred times that pagans don't know anything but how to be pagans and heathens only know how to be heathens. Yes, pray for them. But how often do we pray about the sins within the body of Christ?

We need to be praying for that too. Spare thy people, O God. Spare thy people, O Lord. And give not thine heritage to reproach. This is awesome. God telling them what to pray.

And he's telling them, you pray a covenantal prayer. Spare not thy people, O Lord. And give not thine heritage to reproach. This is covenant that he is telling his people to pray for his people.

And folks, we have nothing else to pray about other than the covenant. Let me rephrase. We have no other right to pray other than the covenant that we have with Almighty God through Jesus Christ. That's the only right that we have to pray. So when we pray, and we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, let me tell you right now, that is not a formula. That is not a formula to pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

[48:11] When you invoke the name of Jesus Christ, you are invoking the power of Christ, realizing that you have no power of your own to reach God.

You have no power for your prayer to enter into the ears of Almighty God. But when you pray in the name of Jesus Christ, you are praying for His power.

You are praying for His mediation, for His intercession, for Him to go to God for you. I thank God for the book of Hebrews that says, we have not a great high priest that cannot be touched with the filling of our infirmity, but was tempted in all manner such as we, yet without sin.

And that is why He is our mediator. That is why He is our intercessor. That is why He is our great high priest. Folks, here God is telling these priests, these ministers, to stand between the porch and the altar.

I tell you now, Jesus Christ never stood between the porch and the altar making intercession such as being talked about right here in verse 17 of the second chapter of Joel.

[49:17] But Jesus Christ hung on a tree. He was suspended between the heaven and the earth and there is where He made intercession on behalf of man, on behalf of sinful man, on behalf of evil man and rebellious man.

Christ hung there between the heaven and the earth. Die! He suffered! He bled on behalf of sinners! Hallelujah! Amen! And there is no greater mediation than that.

And I praise God for that. Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach that the heathens should rule over them. Saying, pray a covenantal prayer.

Not that God needed reminding what He had promised His people that they would inherit the land that they were in at this time. Or the land that God had given them.

The land that they entered into in the book of Joshua. God didn't need reminded of that. But folks, as much as you might think and as much as I might think, I don't need reminded of the gospel sometimes.

[50:19] I do. I need to be reminded of the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I love to be reminded of the goodness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I love to be reminded that I'm a sinner. Because that reminds me of the greatness and the mercy and the grace of Almighty God. I love to be reminded of the gospel.

God here telling them what to pray and adding this element of covenant in it. That the heathens should rule over them. Wherefore, should they say among the people, where is their God?

In other words, when heathen come in, when the heathen come in and they overtake the land, they overtake your people, they carry us into captivity, whatever the case may be, why should they say, where is your God now?

Where is your God now? It's just like Peter wrote in his epistles. He said that we should be ready always to give an account for the hope that lies within us.

[51:27] We should be ready always to do that. To tell the heathens. To tell the pagans. To tell the unbelievers. But folks, we ought to be ready to remind fellow brothers and sisters in Christ of the same thing.

Of why I have hope. Because they may be down on their hope at some time. They may be in a depressed state. They may be sad. The world may be coming against them.

Their job may be coming against them. Their children may be coming against them. Any number of things can be coming against them. Every demon that knows that hell is home could be coming against them.

They need to be reminded of the hope that they have in Jesus Christ. Just like you and I need to be reminded of it. But the heathen, when they say, where is their God?

This prayer here is saying, why should they be allowed to ask that? And before this, they're saying, spare thy people, O Lord. Pray for one another, church.

[52:30] Pray for the lost, yes. Pray for the lost. In fact, I say pray for the lost first and foremost. But do not leave out brothers and sisters in Christ. Do not leave out this local assembly here.

Don't leave out other local assemblies that are standing true to the Word of God. Don't leave out the church worldwide. Pray for them. Folks, we all need reminding.

And we all need reminded that we are sinners. And we all need reminded that God is the Savior. We all need reminded of these things. At some point in our Christian walk, none of us are so perfect.

None of us are so perfect. that we need not be reminded of the goodness and the graciousness and the long-suffering and the patience of God. God bless you all.

That's this evening's message. I appreciate your attention.