

Week 1 – Discussion Questions / Family Conversations

1. Joel used the well-known locust plague tragedy to deliver the Lord's message of judgment to his listeners as well as the hope of repentance.

- a. Can you relate with something in your own life?
- b. Has the Lord ever had to grab your attention through an experience of disobedience to bring you to your senses and remind you of what you should have already been doing as a Christian?
- c. If so, what did it look like?

2. Repentance is one of those Christian ideas that we talk a lot about, but it can be hard to clearly narrow down.

- a. What does true repentance look like, practically-speaking?
- b. Is it more of a process or a one-time event?
- c. How do you know if you have truly repented or not?

3. This week, if you could set aside time and cry out to the Lord, what would you ask Him to restore?

*The nursery will be opening this week for mothers to keep their own children. We will be streaming the service to the nursery area.

*Check out Ibcrichmond.com/men for an upcoming men's conference opportunity. Deadline to register is July 24.



The Book of Joel

~ **It is prophetic** – written by a prophet; deals with prophecy

- * Prophets were called of God to the people of their day.
 - This is important to know and apply as we study prophecy.
- * Things to consider about prophetic writers...
 - They were “covenant mediators”.
 - They spoke God’s message, not their own.
 - They were God’s direct representative to the people.
 - Their messages were often not original, but they were based in something previously decided or understood.

~ **It is poetry** – written in a form of poetic language

- * We don’t often think of poetry as instructional.
- * It does, however, appeal to the whole being. It is emotive. Like a song, it speaks to our emotion and intellect.
- * Poetry stimulates imagination, rouses emotion, feeds intellect, and addresses the will.
- * The prophets used poetry to capture not just the mind, but the heart of the audience.

~ **Its background is not detailed.**

- * No detail on the author, time, specific sin, or circumstance.
- * We can only note that he does not address any kings.

Week 1 – “Have You Ever Seen Anything Like This”

Joel 1:1-20 – What we learn from devastation and calamity...

1. God speaks to His children. – vs. 1

- God mercifully communicates with us.
- He does it in different ways.

2. Recalling and reflecting are needed, even on the “bad things”.

Vs. 2-3 – This is where we find him asking, “Have you seen anything like this? Has it ever been this bad?”

The deep pains and bad circumstances in life should shine an intense light on the depth and immensity of sin. God controls all things, yet suffering, pain, and disaster in this world are results of sin.

- Sin is evil. It destroys and corrupts all. God is aware of all sin and hates all sin. (So should I!)
- A. The control over devastation – vs. 4-7
- No one could do anything to stop it.
- B. The extent of devastation – vs. 7, 10-12
- Everything was destroyed. **It saturated every aspect of life.**
- C. The effect of devastation – vs. 8-9
- “Lament” means to wail or weep. This was a proper response to the circumstance.
- They were without luxury, desire, and necessity.
- However, we find a completely devastating loss in vs. 9.
“Meat Offering” – Lev. 2 – It was offered as a sweet, soothing aroma to God. It indicates pleasure and appeasement.
“Drink Offering” – Ex. 29:40, Num. 15 – This was “poured out” with most other sacrifices. It represented victory and rest.

This would have drawn attention to the fact that they, of themselves, had nothing to offer God. They could not appease or sooth Him or His wrath.

Everyone was affected! Everything was touched! – vs. 16-20

3. The purpose was to point to something greater. – vs. 15

- Joel draws attention to the pain. He does not dodge it.
- “This is as bad as it has ever been, but it is not as bad as it will one day be. **We weren’t ready for this day, but you must make sure you are ready for that day.”**

He is calling the people to redemptive conversation.

Have you used the pain of sin to point to judgment of God and the promise of a Savior? (dinner table, work lunch, phone, social media)

Let the sovereign providence of God on earth direct your eyes, ears, and voice toward His place in heaven!

Even though chapter 1 is an introduction...

- 4. The answer is clearly given. – vs. 14, 19
Come to God!

Trouble should cause us to blame sin and run to God, but we often blame God and run to sin.

Week 2 “Promo” – Joel gives us an essence of the Gospel.

Chapter 1 – “You have nothing to offer.”

Chapter 2 – “So, God will offer it for you.”

Luke 22 –

The bread which is given or “offered” is the body of Jesus Christ.

The drink which is spilt or literally “poured out” is the blood of the Savior.