



***Joel: Praying for God's Glory
through National Tragedy***
Date: 09/11/2016

Pray Together

Use the first few minutes of your time together to lead your group in a focused prayer time.

- **Praise:** Spend time praising God for who He is.
- **Repent:** Take a few moments to silently confess any sin that is lingering in your heart.
- **Ask:** Verbalize your needs and the needs of others to God.
- **Yield:** Surrender your will to God.

Read Together

Much of Joel's background is unknown. Based upon what we know of the message of the book and the events of history, we might conclude that Joel prophesied to the Southern Kingdom of Judah sometime in the early 8th century B.C. His prophecy follows soon after a catastrophic locust plague which inflicts staggering economic loss upon the nation.

Joel uses this event to foreshadow the coming Day of the Lord. While many in Israel were anticipating the Day of the Lord—understanding it to be a day of punishment for her enemies and restoration of her glory—Joel proclaims that the punishment will be for *all* who have been unfaithful to God. The divinely ordained locust plague was a means to inspire repentance and reliance upon the Creator, which had previously been ignored (1:13-20).

God calls out to His people, “Yet even now, return to me with all your heart...rend your hearts and not your garments.” (2:12-13) A glorious restoration of Judah was promised—an outpouring of God's grace toward them (2:18-20) and the punishment upon the unfaithful (3:1-16)—if they would repent.

Outline

1. Joel 1:1-20 – The Locust Plague: The Immediate Disaster
 - a. Joel 1:2-12 – A description of the effect and extent of the disaster
 - b. Joel 1:13-14 – A call to prayer and fasting
 - c. Joel 1:15-20 – A complaint and a prayer
2. Joel 2:1-17 – The Day of the Lord: The Impending Disaster
 - a. Joel 2:1-11 – A description of the impending disaster
 - b. Joel 2:12-14 – An offer of repentance
 - c. Joel 2:15-17 – A call to prayer and fasting
3. Joel 2:8-3:21 – The Lord's Answer
 - a. Joel 2:18-27 – To the immediate disaster: the locusts
 - b. Joel 2:28-3:21 – To the impending disaster: the Day of the Lord

Discuss Together

Use these questions to engage in an informative and impactful discussion.

- As you study Joel, identify the most significant questions you need to answer to better understand its message.



- The Triune God is always the main character of Scripture. What does Joel teach us about God?
- Knowing what Joel teaches us about God, what does the book teach us about humanity?
- How is the gift of God's grace proclaimed in the book of Joel? How is the demand of God's grace proclaimed in the book of Joel?
- How do other passages of Scripture—both Old and New Testament—complement or complete the message Joel proclaimed?
- How does the Gospel impact how you mourn in the midst of a tragedy? What makes Gospel-centered mourning distinct from a more secular perspective?
- How do disciples of Christ communicate His Gospel in the midst of and immediately following a tragedy? Share a time when Christ allowed you proclaim His Gospel through the pain of tragedy.
- “Why does a good God allow such horrible tragedies to take place?” Discuss how you would respond if a friend, family member, or co-worker asked you this question.
- How should the Body of Christ respond to the message of Joel? How do you personally need to respond to this message?

Do Life Together

These questions are designed to be asked in a smaller group of 2-4 people. The smaller setting will provide better opportunity for authentic responses. In your smaller group time, take notes to help others remain accountable to their answers. Grow together!

- How is God calling you to exchange doom for everlasting hope?
- How has Jesus already provided hope in this area?
- Who do you need to share this hope with this week?

Pray Together

Joel proclaimed a repentance and a return to the Lord. Take time now to examine your heart in light of God's Word. In which area(s) is the Holy Spirit leading you to repent of sinful attitudes and actions? How is God calling you to return to Him? Ask others to provide clarity on how you might better align your life to Christ. Ask someone within your group to hold you accountable to this commitment.

