

Joel 2:25-27

Restoration

(The Major Point of the Minor Prophets)

“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.” - **PRAY**

When I was a kid – the guys in my neighborhood and I used to like to play Cowboys and Indians.

A) And one day in a pretend shootout – I was running to get behind an old Chevy that we pretended was a covered wagon.

B) I went sliding into position behind the Chevy only to find out **I had slid right into a RED ANT HILL.**

1) Suddenly my whole body was covered with Red Ants who were angry that I had just destroyed their home.

C) In Panic – I got up and started peeling off my close as I **ran straight to my house about a ½ block away.**

1) By the time I reached the front door – I was almost totally naked but I didn’t care –

E) I just wanted to hit the shower and wash those pesky bugs away- It was a traumatic moment

1) Result: Hate ants especially red ants.... **BUG ME!**

The nation of Judah also had a bug problem!

A) In the days of the Prophet Joel In a day before pesticides... long before the Orkin man...

Aa) A plague of swarming locust swept across the southern kingdom of Judah.

B) A locust is a dull-yellow, or red colored insect - like a short, plump grasshopper.

1) They’re about three inches long, and have two antenna another inch or so long.

C) A swarm of locust resembles a black cloud moving over the landscape

1) Picture of a swarm attacking an elephant in Africa

Locust travel at tremendous speeds, and they are most known for their ferocious appetite

A) The insects strip every green plant of their vegetation.

B) They leave nothing behind. Locust will even eat the bark off the trees.

OT scholar, Charles Feinberg, writes, “Locust have been known to devour every green herb and ever blade of grass in an area of almost 90 square miles, so that the ground gave the appearance of having been scorched by fire.”

C) And this is what happened to Judah in the days of Joel. Joel 1:4 describes the total devastation that occurred around Jerusalem, “What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; what the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; and what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.”

D) The lush, green landscape had been ravaged.

1) **the crops consumed and crippled the economy.**

And We noted in our previous Wed nite study of the book of Joel that God made it clear

A) that the plague of locust was sent because of the People’s sin and rebellion against God.

B) **V.25 My great army which I sent among you.**

1) The Bible tells us that those whom the Lord loves He chastens

C) He will allow plagues to come into our lives to wake us up & get our attention when we are in rebellion.

D) Other times He will allow us to simply suffer the consequences of our sin!

1) Sin always has consequences.

Galatians 6:7 reminds us, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”**

You don't sow apple seeds, and get pear trees or grapevines – you get an apple tree.

A)It's a law that can't be violated. It holds true in the natural world, and in the spiritual world.

B)God is not mocked – a person will always reap what they sow.

1)If you chose to sin against God, you're sowing seeds that will eventually sprout trouble and heartache.

C)Those seeds may not come up tomorrow, or next month, or even next year – you don't reap in the same season that you sow –

1)but those seeds will sprout.

D)Sin leaves scars!

It reminds me of the father whose son was busy sowing his wild oats.

A)They lived on the ranch and the boy would drive into town and get into trouble.

B)To make a point to his son, each time the boy got into TROUBLE his father would drive a nail into the hitching post out by the barn.

1)Over time the post filled up with nails.

C)Eventually, the boy got into serious trouble, and was sentenced to prison.

1)He served five years behind bars.

D)But when he got out, he was broken – and seeking forgiveness

1)his father wanted to show his son he was forgiven, and encourage him with a fresh start.

E)One night the two of them walked out to that hitching post - and one by one the father removed the nails.

It was a powerful demonstration of forgiveness

A)But what brought tears to the son's eyes was the sight of the hitching post once all the nails had been removed.

B)The nail holes were all still there.

1)The sin had been forgiven, but the scars remained.

C)Perhaps you can relate to that story – you are here today and you know you are forgiven- but what you tend to see is – Holes in the fence post

Your life is full of regrets! – If honest – we all have some – right?

A)Maybe for you the regret is a failed marriage? Or mistakes you made with your kids?

B)Or the pain you've caused the people you love?

C)Maybe this week you are dealing with the regret of a chance to witness for Christ you let slip away?

Maybe it was a business opportunity you didn't have faith enough to take?

A)Or a special prompting from God that would've deepened your faith – or taught you His Word –

B)or and opportunity to serve... but you ignored it!

C)We all have regrets

Maybe you look at your life – this past year – 9 months into 2016 and you started the year in Jan with some big spiritual goals

A)You wanted to deepen your prayer life –

B)But it hasn't happened. Been distracted, lazy – left you frustrated.

C)You were all set to read through the Bible in a year – never made it past Leviticus – Devotional life is non existent

D)Perhaps your own sin and selfishness has caused some relationships to be destroyed –

1)you have hurt people who loved you - Trust has been broken.

Well, if you have a few regrets, let me share with you an exciting promise - a thrilling promise.

A)It comes straight from the throne of God.

B)There's not a more encouraging promise in all the Bible, than Joel 2:25.

1)God says to His people then and now, **"I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten,**

C)God says – I am the God who can Restore things! – God is into Restoration!

Charles Spurgeon the famed London preacher who preached in the late 1800's gave this helpful insight: "Lost years can never be restored literally. Time once past is gone forever... You cannot have back your time; **but there is a strange and wonderful way** in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned. The fruits of wasted years may yet be yours." -

D)God can't give back years – can't take you back to your 20's 30's or even last week

1)But he can RESTORE – opportunities and impact

Look at what this meant for the Jewish nation, v 26. God tells them through the Prophet Joel, "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame."

E)Imagine, looking over ravaged and barren fields, then reading this verse.

1)God promises the impossible. - In the end they'll eat in plenty and be satisfied.

There is nothing too hard for God. He can restore broken relationships.

A)Relationships so fractured, you thought they could never be revived.

B)If God created a business opportunity for you once, He can do it again...

1) If He called you to a particular ministry once, He can repeat that calling like He did with Peter...

C)Remember Peter... Three times he denied his Lord in Jesus' most critical hour.

I'm sure Peter thought his Christian life and ministry was done.

A)After what he'd done, how could the Lord want his help?

B)But on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, the risen Lord Jesus appeared to Peter and reinstated a **humbled, broken servant.**

1)Three times he commissioned Peter. God still had great things, and open doors, for Pete.

C)The day of Pentecost came – **Peter empowered by the Holy Spirit – preached – 3,000 people came to Christ**

1)Peter would be a great instrument in the hands of God in the early Church

God can restore lost talents, and lost years, and lost calling, and lost opportunities...

A)**Remember Moses... Moses** tried to deliver the Hebrews by his own hand, and failed miserably.

B)He was banished from Egypt. God shut the door on Moses for 40 long years.

1)God took him to the backside of the desert to humble him. – **After 40 yrs God came calling**

C)Moses didn't begin his ministry of deliverance until he was 80 years old – but he accomplished more in his last 40 years than he did in his first 80 years.

Remember Samson... Oh, how the mighty man had fallen.

A)At one point in his life God used him to kill a thousand Philistines.

B)But Samson let compromise choke out his commitment to God.

C)He wound up captured by the Philistines who promptly gauged out his eyes and bound him to a mill

1)day after day he would grind the grain –like a **Big OX**

2)Sin Blinds, binds, and leaves you grinding life out!

D)One day Samson was brought into the temple of the Philistines to be put on display –

1)He was mocked and ridiculed by a massive crowd

E)Yet, Samson prayed for a final surge of supernatural power.

1)He pulled down the Temple's pillars, and killed more in his dying than he had in his living.

Do you feel like sin has left your grinding thru life? You live in that proverbial battle of Condemnation.

A)God wants to work in your life to restore to you untapped potential, and thrown-away

opportunities, and set-aside talents, and ignored gifts,

B) He'll make up for the foolishness of your youth
- or the impulsiveness of your decisions –
1) or the frailty of your flesh or the weakness and fickleness of your commitments.

C) Just like He did for Peter – for Moses for Samson – for the nation of Israel
1) HE CAN DO THAT FOR YOU!

But here is what we need to see this morning – Israel had a part to play in their restoration.

A) The restoration was not just going to happen as they sat there and did nothing!

B) God was willing to not only give a fresh start, but completely restore the years that the locust had eaten

1) But Judah had to be willing to do three things

C) Three things that I want to zero in on this morning, three things that we also need to do,

D) three things that need to happen in our lives that we may experience the same glorious restoration that God wanted to do in Israel

E) - Would you mark these Three things and allow them to sink into your heart

#1 – Sincere repenting - Verse 12-14

“Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

¹³ **So rend your heart, and not your garments;**

Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of **great kindness**; And He relents from doing harm.¹⁴ Who knows *if* He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him—A grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

Here the Lord declares I want you to come before me with weeping, with the rending of the heart, not the rending of your garments

A) The rending of the garments was the outward sign that people often went through

B) They would tear their clothes to show their sorrow 1) but in this case it was just an outward gesture, not an inward reality

C) God says – I don't want you going through the motions – **REND YOUR HEARTS**

We can do that too. – Things get routine or mechanical – say right things – no heart

A) Jesus indicted the religious leaders of Israel –
“These people worship me with their mouths but their hearts are far from me.”

B) **God sees the heart** – He is not impressed with right religious actions when our heart is wrong.

1) God is interested in the Heart

C) God says – don't just go through the motions – Rend your hearts – Hearts Cry out!

Starts with Repentance

A) the word repent is a military term it means to stop and turn and go in the opposite direction

B) like soldiers making an about face, they stop and turn around, they stop going in the direction they are commanded to turn from

C) this is the idea of repentance – you stop going in the direction you were,

1) you make a decision to turn around and go the other way

We own our sin – no excuses – not rationalizing why we did what we did!

A) We call it what God calls it and we go in the opposite direction

B) Turn from the sin – turn from the compromise and go in the opposite direction.

C) Get back to a passionate seeking of God – from the heart!

1) That is the first step – if you haven't done that you need to do that TODAY!

#1 – Sincere Repenting

#2 – A Solemn Re-gathering V.15-17

¹⁵ **Blow the trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, Call a sacred assembly;**

¹⁶ **Gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and**

nursing babes;

Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, And the bride from her dressing room.

¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, Weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not give Your heritage to reproach, That the nations should rule over them.

Why should they say among the peoples, Where is their God?" "

A) **Blow the trumpet the Lord says**, and let the people gather again, let them assemble, everyone

B) Let them seek my face corporately

1) Let them come together in unity

C) He was saying this because you see the people had forsaken this kind of assembly

1) They were forsaking fellowship

It is interesting how this happens to people so often.

A) In Judah it started in a time of affluence and ease!

B) The Crops were abundant - the money was accumulating

C) And what happened?? – their interest in God started to wane

➤ **"Oh I can worship God anywhere I don't need to go to the temple!" – He knows my heart**

I have seen this happen to people here –

A) Things are going good in their lives – distracted – they quit fellowshiping

B) Statistics today reveal that the average American Christian only – attends Church twice a month.

C) Sure there is online – podcast – but it is not the same as being with the Body.

Away on a trip I can text and email and call and even facetime my wife

A) Not the same as being in her presence. Face to face

B) Same is true in fellowship – we gather – God speaks to us corporately –

1) something happens in this room when we worship together – we sense His presence.

C) God was calling his people back into Fellowship
The Lord says blow the trumpet and let everyone be there

A) **Don't offer excuses** – Notice - He calls out nursing moms, newly married couples

B) And what He is saying is - There should be no excuses –

C) But it is not just about getting back into the fellowship –

1) but it is about seeking the Lord again with a passion and a fervency.

D) Jesus is it – Jesus said to the Church at Ephesus that they left their first love –

1) Remember fallen – remember back – Jesus was everything to you – Repent / Return –

2) **get back to first pursuing Jesus**

E) Wed night Bible study – Home group – Men's group – quick making excuses and get back to pursuing Jesus with a fervor

#1 – Sincere Repenting

#2 – A Solemn Re-gathering

#3 – A Spirited Rejoicing – V. 21-27

Fear not, O land; Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done marvelous things!

²² Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field; For the open pastures are springing up, And the tree bears its fruit;

The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.

²³ **Be glad then, you children of Zion, And rejoice in the LORD your God;**

For He has given you the former rain faithfully,
And He will cause the rain to come down for you—

The former rain, And the latter rain in the first month.

²⁴ The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame. Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel: I am the LORD

your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame.”

Now Picture this: God is telling his people – looking at the devastation from the locust plague

A)And he is saying **Repent – Re-gather** – return to seeking me –

B)AND **Rejoice** at what I am going to do – Restore the Years that the locust have eaten

C)I AM SURE THEY WERE TEMPTED TO SAY –but there is nothing to REJOICE ABOUT

1)All they could see was DEVASTATION!

D)This takes faith – Looking at barrenness – believing God is going to restore

Hebrews 11 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen

A)Hope is the absolute expectation of coming good, so much so that begin to behave as if it has already happened

B)God had made a promise to them

1)And it was time to believe it and start rejoicing

C)Hebrews 11:6 says, without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He who comes to Him must believe that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him

God says to Israel and to us- I have promised that I will restore the years the locusts have eaten,

A)I have promised you I am going to come through, start rejoicing, start exalting even before you see it happening

- I love the story President Reagan used to tell – about the little boy on the game show, and there were three doors and he chooses door number one

B)Start by showing you what you passed up

Door #3 motorized skateboard- Shoot

Door #2 15 Speed Mountain Bike – Bummer

C)What was behind door #1 – Big pile of Manure

1)and the audience groaned saying oh no you chose the bad door, - Kid ran on stage – shovel – digging
2)Host what are you doing – All that manure – there must be a pony in there

That is faith, that is hope, that is rejoicing

A)Now I know some of you are thinking Rob – isn't that kind of blab it and grab it theology,
B)isn't that the power of positive thinking new age junk

C)No and here's why

1)Name it and claim theology is you telling God what you want and demanding it be so

The Power of positive thinking is you deciding what is best for you life and trying to create it by willing it in your life

A)What I am talking about is far different –

B)it is believing the already revealed will of God in His Word for you

C)It is taking God at His Word – which, whether you see it or not this morning – is really solid ground

So if you are here today – Regrets – sin – things haven't repented of – Repent today.

A)If you have repented – great –

B)but maybe you need to set your heart back – to pursuing Jesus as your first love

C)Maybe – you just need to rejoice – Exalt the Lord – PROMISE KEEPER!

The theme of the Book of Joel is the Day the Lord

A)It begins by discussing this immediate Day – Locust plague that devastated the land

B)God did Restore – the nation

C)But then Joel prophesied about an Imminent day that was coming-

1)This time a Real army – Babylon that carried them off into Slavery –

D)Once again because of their sin – You know that God restored the people back again after 70 yrs captivity

Then Final Chapter Joel writes about an Ultimate Day

Not just for Israel but all nations

A)Jesus the Messiah would return and once again bring a Restoration.

B)My Point – God is the God of Restoration

C)Of that final day Joel Prophesied – God would pour out His spirit on all flesh

1) V.28 “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your old men shall dream dreams,

Your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ And also on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

On the day of Pentecost Peter quoted from Joel Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32 –

A)Peter was not claiming that what took place at Pentecost was the Fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32

Reason there were several things that didn't happen. A)The Holy Spirit was not poured out on all flesh – Distinct group of Jewish people –

B)There were **no signs** in heavens – the sun was not turned to darkness or the moon to blood –

C)Peter didn't say this is the fulfillment of Joel 2 He said this is that which was spoken of by the Prophet Joel

1)He was referring to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit being poured out on more than just a few select people is like what Joel was talking about

A)We might say this was a preview of coming attractions

B)God continues to give us preview: People Repent of their sin – Return to him with a passion

C)Rejoice in His ability to keep His promises

D)You today – Your Day of the Lord – new start

1)Saved – Renewed – Refueled