

July 28, 2013 Sermon Application Handout

“The Heart of True Repentance”

Joel 2:1-17

I. Introduction

1. Before you begin, take time to pray and ask God to help you understand the meaning of true repentance as you contemplate who He is; gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and steadfast in love (Joel 2:12-13).
2. Review your lesson for Joel, Chapter 1. What was one specific teaching that you understood from that chapter and applied to your life this past week?

II. The U _____ of True Repentance

3. By way of review, what had God sent to Judah according to Joel, chapter one? Why had God sent this to them?
4. Read Joel 2:1-17. How does Joel open this chapter? What's the tone behind it? What theme is Joel continuing to draw the people's attention to?
5. What day is coming according to Joel 2:1-2? When is this day coming? What kind of day will it be? What do you know about this day (cf. Joel 2:10, 3:15)? Is it mentioned anywhere else in Scripture?
6. As Joel announces with urgency what this future day is, he also describes a day in which another destructive army is heading their way. How does this destructive army compare to the locusts in chapter one? Is Joel talking about the same thing or is this something else? Pay close attention to the emphasis Joel places on the army in verses 3, 7, and 9.

7. Although there is great debate over what this army is, Joel is not so much emphasizing the identity of the army as much as he is trying to emphasize the destructive power of the army which is coming and coming soon. In light of what the people have already experienced in chapter one, how do you think these people felt when they found out that yet another devastating invasion was coming? Do you think it would get their attention?

8. Although it's hard to imagine that these people could go through more than what they had already experienced in chapter one and what they are about to experience in chapter two, Joel reiterates to Judah that the destructive army is only a foreshadow of what is yet to come if something doesn't change. How does Joel describe it in verse 11?

III. The N_____ of True Repentance (vv. 12-17)

9. How might these people endure that day according to verse 12? What response is God calling for?

10. The Hebrew word for repent (return) in verse 12 is *shuwb* (שׁוּב). It means a physical turning. In the moral realm, it also means to turn away from sin to God. It has the idea of turning all the way around, like a U-turn. In light of that, what is God calling His people to turn from? Are there particular sins mentioned in the text? What is the root problem according to God?

11. How does God want His people to "return to Him?" What do some of those actions represent? What does that reveal is going on in the heart? Is anyone exempt from this (cf. 2:15, 17)?

12. Based on your answer above, what does that tell you about what God is most interested in? Is He waiting for you to simply clean up your act? How should we come to Him? What would this look like in the day to day of life?

13. Joel is trying to express to Judah the gravity of their sin against God. But it's not isolated to just them. In like manner, when you consider your own sin, does it ever occur to you that your sin is against a Holy God and Him alone? Do you ever think about the death of God's Son who paid the penalty for your sin? Do you ever thank God for His grace and willingness to forgive those who are truly repentant, even though they don't deserve it? Take some time right now to bow your head in prayer. If there is sin for you to repent of, return back to God with all your heart and cry out to Him. Then thank Him for who He is as stated above.

14. What is the second command that God gives in verse 13 which shows the nature of true repentance? What does God mean by this? Is this an outward act or an inward change?

15. Read Psalm 51. This psalm is a prayer of David who is deeply broken over his sin. His sin involved adultery and murder and deception until Nathan confronted him. As you read through this Psalm, look for phrases that David repeats in his prayer to God. Then list out the characteristics of what a repented heart looks like below.
 - A repented heart accepts full r_____ for his sin (2, 3, 4).
 - A repented heart sees sin as s_____ (1-5, 9)
 - A repented heart wants a complete c_____ (7, 10)
 - A repented heart yearns to be right with the L_____ (11-12)
 - A repented heart is a contrite and broken h_____ (17)

16. As you consider the list above, what is it that you can bring to God when you have sinned against Him? Does He delight and desire your good works? What is it that He's calling you to do? What will He accept from you?

17. Beloved, repentance is not just a one-time act that happens at salvation that day when the believer places their faith in the finished work of Christ. Although Christians are new creatures in Christ; they still struggle with sin in their life this side of heaven and will continue to be one of confession and repentance (1 John 1:9; Rev. 2-3). So if you are not sure if true repentance has taken place in your own life, take time right now to ask these important questions:
 - 1) Is there a change in my affections?
 - 2) Do I want to know God in a deeper way by spending time with Him in prayer and His Word?
 - 3) Do I love Jesus?
 - 4) Do I love His people?
 - 5) Does it hurt me when I sin against Him?
 - 6) Do I desire to be restored to God when I sin?

18. Read verse 13 once more. How is God described? What kind of invitation is He extending? Is this just about averting judgment? Why or why not?

19. If you find after doing this lesson that you may not be a believer, don't delay. God is calling you to turn from your sin (repent), place your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord of your life. Beloved, Jesus is coming, it's imminent! So today as you read His Word, do not harden your heart but rather return to the Lord, and rend your heart and the Lord your God will extend His mercy, forgiveness, and steadfast love.

IV. Application

20. Memorize and dwell on Joel 2:12-13 this week. Ask yourself, what does rending my heart look like in these areas of my life? Contact a brother or sister in Christ. Share with them your struggles and ask them to hold you accountable.

21. Take time to study Psalm 51 and 32 this week. Highlight 5 important statements within each Psalm. Choose the most important Psalm to apply in your life right now. List three specific steps you can take to start practicing that truth this week. Practice those steps daily.

22. Read Thomas Watson's *The Doctrine of Repentance* then follow up with *Holiness* by J.C. Ryle. As you read through the individual books, use the same strategy above in question #21.

23. Open up to a brother or sister this week and establish an accountability relationship.

“A true penitent is a sin-loather. If a man loathe that which makes his stomach sick, much more will he loathe that which makes his conscience sick. It is more to loathe sin than to leave it. One may leave sin for fear, as in a storm the plate and jewels are cast overboard, but the nauseating and loathing of sin argues a detestation of it. Christ is never loved till sin be loathed. Heaven is never longed for till sin be loathed. When the soul sees an issue of blood running, he cries out, Lord, when shall I be freed from this body of death? When shall I put off these filthy garments of sin and have the fair mitre of glory set upon my head? Let all my self-love be turned into self-loathing (Zech. 3.4-5). We are never more precious in God's eyes than when we are lepers in our own.”

-Thomas Watson

RESOURCES

Specific Resource for Joel:

Joel and Obadiah by Irvin Busenitz

Joel and the Day of Lord by Walter Price

General Resources for the Minor Prophets:

The Minor Prophets by James Montgomery Boice

The Minor Prophets by Charles Feinberg