

Advent 2020  
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Week 2 – The Way The World Truly Changes

Introduction:

After sin entered the world and long before Christ was born in Bethlehem God had called out a group of people called the Hebrews. They were given a very specific task that came with a promise.

God would be very present with these people.

They were to be a light and guide to the rest of the world.

God was going to place them in strategic places to bring His love, justice and mercy, literally His kingdom into the world.

Instead of bringing the light of God into the world they allowed the darkness of the world into them.

This dissolving of mission brought so much darkness and suffering into the world.

Sin never comes alone. It always brings death.

Some of you are in really hard and dark places because of decisions you have made.

Some of you are in really hard and dark places because of the decisions others have made.

In all this failure we see that God is still very present with His people.

Time and time again we have rejected God, but God keeps reaching out to us.

This isn't just their story – it's ours. As Christians we are adopted into the family.

It comes with a specific task and a promise.

God will be present with you and he will place you in strategic places to bring the love, justice and mercy of God into the world.

We also continually reject our mission allowing more sin and death to enter the world.

God sent a perfect example of priest and prophet in Christ.

What would happen if a group of Christians transitioned from fans of Christ to people who really did accept their role?

To the text: (Note that we will read and teach through each section.)

Joel 2:12-13; 2:28-29; 3:17-21 (ESV):

Joel 2:12-13

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments."

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

- The book of Joel isn't about a specific sin, it assumes that the reader has been following along with all the prophetic books. It's about all the people of God missing their mission.
- The solution is found in the text: It's about the heart posture of humility. "...rend your hearts not your garments" (2:13). We often think of right action when we think of spiritual maturity. There is an imperative precursor: the posture of your heart. Quickly the people of God were using their knowledge of God not as a means of humility and service to others but to make them proud of heart.

- *“As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you.” -C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity*

- **What do I mean by humility?** Let’s bring definition to humility.
  - I do not mean timid or weak. I mean selfless and teachable. Think charity.
  - What comes to mind is “What about them?” rather than “What about me?”
  - **Spiritual humility is accepting that you are unique and gifted by God and that your gifts and influence aren’t for you. They are for the benefit of others.**

This begs a great question.

- **What happens when this humility truly comes?** “Rending of hearts.” The Lord will pour out His Spirit.

#### Joel 2:28-29

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, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

- **There will be beautiful unity, a coming together, and the presence of God will break down social divisions. They will use their unique insights into the mysteries of God as gifts for others rather than superiority over them.**

#### Joel 3:17-21

“So you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be holy, and strangers shall never again pass through it. And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD and water the Valley of Shittim. Egypt shall become a desolation and Edom a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the people of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem to all generations. I will avenge their blood, blood I have not avenged, for the LORD dwells in Zion.”<sup>1</sup>

- **When the heart is right, the hearts of people not *only* their actions, it will produce absolute beauty, a new Eden. We can't do this without the help of God.**

Final Thoughts:

If you want the powerful presence of God, it doesn’t come from perfect actions or superior knowledge. It comes from a humble heart. Yes, knowledge and actions matter but alone they do not bring the powerful presence of God. Only humility can do that.

During Christmas we sing the song “Joy to the World.” In it there is a line that is spot on. “Let every heart prepare Him room.” That’s it. That’s the place God’s Spirit meets with you. In a humble heart.

Next Steps Cards:

What is God speaking to you?

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Joel.