

Sunday Evening August 19, 2018

“Turn” Joel 2:12-13

"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. (Joel 2:12-13 NKJ)

1. The occasion of this call to turn, the nearness of deserved wrath and judgment –

*1. This wrath will be different, greater, unprecedented, unique – ... ² Hear this, you elders, and give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has **anything like** this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers? (Joel 1:2 NKJ)*

*2. News – worthy, tell your children, grand & great grand ... – Tell your children about it, **let** your children **tell** their children, and their children another generation. (Joel 1:3 NKJ)*

3. Devouring locusts – 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. (Joel 1:4 NKJ)

Joel 1:5 – Joel 2:11; These verses are about locusts, an army, and the day of the LORD!

The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong *is the One* who executes His word. For the day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible; Who can endure it? (Joel 2:11 NKJ)

*4. We are also near dreadful wrath, which calls for turning – But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (2 Peter 3:10-12 NKJ)*

There is a monster on the road, turn, spin, repent, FAST!

II. The nature of this turning –

1. It must be whole-hearted –

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, ...

“with the entire force of your moral purpose.” J.M. Smith

Everything we do in relation to God and Christ should be whole-hearted –

A. Whole-hearted love is commanded -

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NKJ)

B. Half-heartedness is rejected, refused –

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Revelation 3:15-16 NKJ)

C. Christ is worthy of our highest love –

"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁸ "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:37-38 NKJ)

2. It must be extreme, including –

A. Fasting shows we are serious –

...with fasting... Joel 2:12

And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. ⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? ¹⁰ Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3:4-10 NKJ)

B. Weeping – shows we are sorry!

Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because *men* do not keep Your law. (Psalm 119:136 NKJ)

Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy.⁶ He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves *with him*. (Psalm 126:5-6 NKJ)

C. Mourning – shows we are more sorry, sorrowful for sin!

Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4 NKJ)

D. Heart rending – shows we are greatly sorrowful!

¹³ So rend your heart, and not your garments ... Joel 2:13 A

E. Our turning must be extreme because our sins are extreme, extremely difficult to overcome –

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? *Then* may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. (Jeremiah 13:23 NKJ)

"And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."²⁵ When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"²⁶ But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:24-26 NKJ)

III. The direction of this turning –

1. *It is a turning toward God -*

"Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me... Joel 2:12 A
return to the LORD your God Joel 2:13 A

2. *It is a turning away from sin and death (judgment, wrath) to life –*

"Say to them: `As I live,' says the Lord GOD, `I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel. 33:11 NKJ)

Thus you must answer the end and intention of the judgment; for it was sent for this end, to convince you of your sins, to humble you for them, to reduce you to your right minds and to your allegiance." God brings us into straits, that he may bring us to repentance and so bring us to Himself. Matthew Henry

IV. Reasons for turning –

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. (Joel 2:12-13 NKJ)

All these reasons are in God Himself:

1. *He is gracious*
2. *He is merciful*
3. *Slow to anger*
4. *Greatly kind*
5. *He relents from doing harm*

"After announcing the terrible judgment, the prophet shows that his purpose was not simply to inspire terror, but rather to bring the people back to their right minds. But this he could not do unless he gave them the hope of forgiveness. I have said many times—and indeed the whole Bible proves it—that men cannot be brought back to the right way unless they receive the hope of God's compassion. For despair makes men more obstinate and doubles their wickedness, rather multiplies it a hundredfold.

For when a man who has done wrong despairs, he hurls himself wholly into the gulf of wickedness without any restraint whatever. Therefore, the prophet now describes the kindness and compassion of God in order gently to lead the people to apply themselves to repentance." John Calvin

V. Why turn quickly, whole-heartedly?

Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him-- ... (Joel 2:14 NKJ)

2:14. "The words **who knows** testify to the Lord's sovereignty in the matter (cf. 2 Samuel 12:22; Jonah 3:9). Even if sinful Israel repented, she could not presume on God's mercy as if it were something under their control which He had to grant automatically. They could only hope that **He** would **turn and have pity** (cf. Malachi 3:7) ...

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

They could not, we must not, presume on God's mercy! The thief on the cross attains to salvation in the last moments of his life, the Proverbs 1:20-33 refusers of grace, wisdom and knowledge are LOST though they CRY to God with their last breaths...

Arnold A. Brevick