



Minor Prophets – Major Challenges

Cell Notes 2019

Study 1. Joel (Part 1) A call to Repent

Aim: To understand the key themes of Joel's writings and to consider what repentance looked like then and now.

Resources: The ability to play YouTube clips, paper and pens.

To start with: If you were to characterise the current state of your relationship with God as an animal, what animal would it be? (E.g. If you're a little sluggish at the moment you might chose a slug or a sloth)

In the next 2 studies we will be considering an animal – or rather insect – that's pretty significant in Israel's relationship with God.

Engaging the text:

Part 1. God's Judgement

Watch the Bible project introduction to Joel (6 mins) <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/joel/>

1. Some parts of Joel are quite well known but what in here was new information for you?

Read **Joel 1.1-12**

2. What do you imagine a locust swarm to be like?

To give you an idea of what swarming locusts look like, take a look at Planet Earth (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYPGOoijy8g>).

Or for a modern day example, take a look at this news report on Madagascar's locust plague in 2013 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT0gUjMcOWk>)

3. To what extent do you think we should view disasters (either large scale or personal) as judgement from God today? (Take a look at how Jesus responds to news of a disaster in Luke 13.1-5)

Part 2. A Call to respond

Although he doesn't explain the specifics of Israel's sin, Joel makes it clear that in this case it is what has led to God's Judgement. However, even then the situation is not without hope.

Read **Joel 1.13-14**

1. What instructions are given and who to?

Read **Joel 2.12-17**

2. According to Joel, what does GENUINE repentance look like and what is it motivated by?
3. As a rule, how do you view repentance from sins? How far does it match with what Joel is expressing here?
4. In order to consider our own attitude towards repentance, give people paper and a pen. Ask them to write the word REPENT in the middle of the paper and then spend some time (at least 5 mins in quiet) praying/contemplating/ doodling/ writing



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- Whether there is something the Lord is calling them to repent of – either in their life as an individual or their part in corporate sins against God.
- What that repentance might look like for them?

Response:

(and this will be difficult): Encourage people to be as brave and honest as they can to talk and pray in pairs/small groups about what the Holy Spirit has been saying to them. (N.B. Please do give people the option not to share right now if it's very personal – but encourage them to talk to someone they trust in the near future).

Finish by reading aloud together the call and promise of Joel 2.13. '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.'