



Joel 1:4–12

Made to Mourn the Loss of Public Worship

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Main idea: It grieves the Lord, when His people live lives to whose joy public worship is not essential. So, when He comes in the mercy of judgment, He takes away their other joys and makes them join in the grieving.

- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ Awake, you drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine,
For it has been cut off from your mouth.
- ⁶ For a nation has come up against My land,
Strong, and without number;
His teeth are the teeth of a lion,
And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.
- ⁷ He has laid waste My vine,
And ruined My fig tree;
He has stripped it bare and thrown it away;
Its branches are made white.
- ⁸ Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For the husband of her youth.
- ⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering
- Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;
The priests mourn, who minister to the LORD.
- ¹⁰ The field is wasted,
The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
The new wine is dried up,
The oil fails.
- ¹¹ Be ashamed, you farmers,
Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field has perished.
- ¹² The vine has dried up,
And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree,
The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—
All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely joy has withered away from the sons of men.

Introduction: what to do when the joy is gone.

1. Awake! (v4–7)

- a. The people who would not weep and wail, v4–5
 - i. Some were wickedly controlled by pleasure, 5b
 - ii. Some simply had earthly pleasure as their highest pleasure, v5c
- b. The God Whose mercy refused to weep alone, v6–7
 - i. But the land is God’s land, and the people are His vine (cf. Isa 5) and His fig tree (cf. Hos 9:10)
 - ii. The grief to the Lord that was already true in their self-gladness and self-fulfillment, the Lord now makes them to feel by taking away all of their gladness and all of their fulfillment.

2. Lament! (v8–10)

- a. The intensity of the lamentation, v8
- b. The leaders of the lamentation, v9
 - i. What happens to God’s house is of ultimate importance by comparison to what happens to what happens to our own house
 - ii. What happens to God’s service is of ultimate importance by comparison to what happens to our own service
 - iii. The Lord has uniquely positioned priests in the church (and fathers in the home) to feel the pain first and greatest when His worship is impoverished
- c. The helps unto lamentation, v10
 - i. Because their worship was so outward and visible, there were many helps; even the land “mourned” to help them.
 - ii. But the Lord has not so constructed our worship. It is made of assembling, reading, singing, praying, preaching, and the sacraments. That is to say: it is personally and vitally made of Christ Himself, of Whom the former largely outward worship was a shadow picture. In the past, if you had sight, smell, and taste, you could easily have perceived the helps of v10. Now, the help is perceptible only those to whom Christ is enough because Christ is all.

3. Be ashamed! (v11–12)

- a. The content of the lamentation: frustration of the ultimate purpose and joy of all our work.
- b. God Himself is the chief end of all our work, v11. Farming and vine-dressing had a significant purpose in the nourishment of the people. But their ultimate purpose unto the worship of God (cf. 4th commandment) was easily seen because of the use of their product unto the public worship. If our work is not unto the Lord, may the Lord frustrate it as He did His people’s in v11.
- c. God Himself is the chief joy in all our joys, v12. Since they found themselves able to have joy apart from joy in Him, He dried up and withered their joy altogether. If our joy is not in the Lord, may the Lord frustrate it as He did His people’s in v12.

Conclusion

Your chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And the chief part of this is the worship assembly of the redeemed. If we are not thinking and living this way, then it is a great mercy, when God stretches out His almighty arm to wake us up.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Joel chapter 1 and verses 4 through 12. Joel chapter 1. Verses 4 through 12 is our portion that has asked for God's help.

Oh Lord that your word may be effectual for all of our salvation for bringing us to faith and making us right before you in the righteousness of Jesus. Adopted in Him as your children and conformed more and more to His image until at last you bring us to glory and have made us like Him.

We must attend their unto with diligence and preparation and prayer. But we do not have of ourselves diligence. We did not have of ourselves preparation even now as we pray we do so independence upon your spirit and the confidence that Christ Himself intercedes for us that it is. He who has been praying even?

Since the garden that you would keep us by your word who are still in the world. We come now to receive your word and we pray that your spirit would put out of our minds all distractions and cause our hearts to be moved by you and right response to you and that you would subdue our wills that we would believe and feel as your word instructs and do as your word commands.

Grant that our receiving would be faith in faith not. Unbelieving so that it would fail to profit the generation who had heard it and yet you swore in your wrath that they would not enter your everlasting rest. Grant that we would receive it with love that it would be a joy to us because it is yours.

Stir up in our hearts then love for you who have first loved us. That we would receive your word out of love for you. Pray that your spirit would go ahead of us now and that he would make our hearts fertile soil that it might be laid up in our hearts.

So that it would. Take root and grow up strong and not be choked out by either the pleasures or the cares of this life and that it would bear fruit 30 and 60 and the hundredfold. As you make us to practice it in our lives. Oh God when we realize what a great work we need you to do.

Just for us to hear rightly now. We thank you and praise you. That this is exactly the work that we read in your own word that you have committed yourself to do. For all those upon whom you have set that everlasting and electing love. And so come now and do what pleases you we pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

As we come and hear the word red let us rise. In respect for that word. Joel chapter 1 verses 4 through 12, these are God's words. What the chewing locust left the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left. The crawling locust has eaten. What the crawling locust left the consuming locust has eaten.

Awake you drunkards. And wait. And rail or you drinkers of wine. Because of the new wine for it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against my land. Strong and without number. His teeth are the teeth of a lion. And he has the fangs of a fierce lion.

He has laid waste my vine. And ruined my fig tree. He has stripped it there. And thrown it away. Its branches are made white. Meant. Like a virgin. With set cloth. For the husband of her youth.

The grand offering and the drink offering had been cut off from the house of your way. The priests learn. To minister to your way. The field is wasted the landmarks. For the grain is ruined. The new line is dried up. The oil fails.

Be ashamed you farmers. Where you find dressers. For the wheat and the barley because the harvest of the field has perished. The vine has dried up. And the fig tree has weathered. The pomegranate tree. The palm tree also. And the apple tree. All the trees of the field are whether.

Surely joy. Has withered away. From the sun's. Of men.

So far the reading. Of God's inspired. And inherent word. Please be seated.

What are we to do and the joy is gone? Everyone even and in some cases especially believers. Goes through times when? The joy just isn't there.

And the Lord. Sometimes brings us through those times with the same intent. Behind what he brought the people of Israel through such a time in this passage. But it's not just the people of Israel the conclusion to the passage in verse 12. Says surely Joy has withered away from the sons of.

Adam. It's a singular noun and it's. Could be a common noun, but it's probably a proper noun. That we were created to have our joy in God. And our first father refused to. And all of his children since then have been prone to find our joy in the things that the creator has made rather than in the creator himself the people all of the children of Adam who had committed this error finding joy in what God has given apart from the God who has given it it was his people it was his church it was his church then and it is his church now most of all that should have repented of this.

But there and we like them. Find it all too easy all too often to have quite enjoyable lives. Apart from our God. Apart from thoughts of him apart from desperation for him apart from dependence upon him apart from delight in him apart from devotion to him. Just so long as we have the food and the drink and the fulfillment in our work and relative ease of doing what we want that comes by some semblance of peace and liberty.

So long as we can continue pleasing ourselves without him we often find it easy. So it's actually a great mercy. When if we're coasting along with joy like that. He decides to take it away. So that we may be brought back. To delighting in him. So that our chief end will be to glorify God.

And to enjoy him forever. Rather than to glorify ourselves. And enjoy ourselves. Forever. So there are three primary commands in our passage, so always a help to a preacher and hopefully a help to a listener when the Lord makes it fall out like that because you don't really have to work hard to get your outline.

First in verses four through seven.

You see we may have zero delight in God, but much delight in other things and one of the things that he does when he makes us to feel our misery is he saying? That prosperous you are meth fulfilled you do not have real joy it's easy for us to be loved to see in isn't it?

To be rich without Christ to be like that ruler in our loot reading. Who thought he was awake he'd paid real close attention to the commandments superficially speaking and thought he had kept all these from his youth and he recognized in Jesus what he thought was a kindred spirit another man like himself who was keeping the commandments pretty good didn't see that Jesus is God and so Jesus challenges him.

You have no idea what goodness is even though Jesus was good because he is God. Well first command is awake in verses 4 through 7 second command whatever we're waking up to do well yes, but to get there there's. A prerequisite. Lament. There's something to grieve over. So that the rejoicing may be real.

Maybe right. And then in the third place and verses 11 and 12 be ashamed and if you want you can just put be frustrated there because the shame there isn't really the burning of embarrassment it's it's a use of the word be ashamed which means you work really hard for something you aim and you plan and you're diligent and you do it right it's well executed and you still don't get the result.

Be ashamed or be frustrated first then away.

Break you drunkards and weep and well all you drinkers of wine because of the new one for it has been cut off from your mouth. For a nation has come up against my land this is the Lord speaking strong and without number his teeth or the teeth of a lion.

And he has the fangs of a fierce lion he has laid waste my vine and ruined my fig tree. He has stripped it bare and thrown it away it's branches are made white you see the the people of God in the Old Testament where people who are tied to a particular land and it was a particular land in which they were to go and worship God, this is what God had told if we were to have continued an exodus and hopefully many of you are familiar with the opening chapters a of Exodus let my people go that they may worship me.

God was bringing them not. Just to Sinai but to Israel to the promised land that they might worship him and he was giving them a land that was flowing with milk and honey, but it was flowing with milk and honey not only and not even primarily so that they could have all of their earthly desires fulfilled but because he had designed his Old Testament worship to be full of all these shadow pictures of Jesus and all of the grain offerings and all of the drink offerings and all the applying of the oil and all of the animal sacrifices everything.

Out to them how God was restoring the sinful people by the forgiveness that comes through the sacrifice of Christ to a fellowship with him for which we were designed and which we would find out when we find that it is God the Son to whom we are united and that it is the glory that he has had with the father from before the world's began that is our ultimate inheritance to behold that and that Jesus came and he says, I've spoken these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that you may have.

It to the full and so God had built into the Old Testament worship that looked forward to Christ all of these wonderful shadow pictures, that's the ultimate reason for the land of Israel to produce growing plentifully that is the ultimate reason for the land of Israel to produce wine plentifully.

Ultimately the highest and greatest use of bread and wine as one of which we will make use not too many minutes from now. But they did not value. The worship of God. Through those things appointed with God that looked forward to the Messiah of God so that they might enjoy the everlasting blessing of God.

They lived by the assumption that the purpose of bread is to fill bellies and make them feel good. And the purpose of wine was to relax and rejoice and celebrate and reinvigorate. And many even had fallen into drunkenness and so they're in a spiritual. Handling. Good things that God had given them.

And not enjoying the God who had given it to them and his goodness. I wonder if you have been living in a spiritual coma.

Is he the delight. Of every day of your life when you come and you eat and you're thanking God for the food and I know little boys and not so little boys there are different the different things that you're thankful for you come with with a little more ease of being thankful for and one of the things you feel most easily thankful for is the fruit because it's been more than three minutes since you had a meal.

But when you come and thank him for the food and you're in that habit, does it underline to you that he himself is better than the food? So that if it hadn't been forty minutes about forty days. And he said,

Come enjoy bread apart from your father. You would say. There's nothing enjoyable apart from my father besides which I have every word that precedes from his mouth. Thank you very much. I have joy without bread because I had my father.

Are you living in a spiritual coma? And what you find it very easy to enjoy a day in which when you lay your head on the pillow at night, you realize you've had hardly a thought for your creator and your Redeemer all that day. It's one of the reasons why we need that not just the daily

do it at home therapy exercises in the means of grace and our secret worship and our family worship.

Oh. Fathers, are you training your children into a spiritual coma? By the lack of consistency in the family worship. Where you have full and happy days. That had none of Jesus. And gathering to him and feasting upon him. Well for doing badly on our do it at home exercises, then we find that when we come to the weekly therapy appointment as it will and God.

Help us not to think of that as an illustration for all that worship is it feels almost blasphemous to say but to come on the Lord's Day we'd need it, don't we? We need to come and find that God himself is all of his worship and that the way that He has given us to worship.

Him is best because He's given Himself in those things and we don't even add anything else. Note none of the children's catechism kids got it, but did you did you hear that phrase them that hate me? Because either you love God's worship the way he designed it because it has him in it or you hate him and add things to the worship because there are things that you enjoy more than himself.

The entire yourself it's about him. Just like Saul told Samuel. Oh, well, the sacrifices are totally about God. And how did Samuel answer? Desire mercy. Not sacrifice. God treasures obedience more than the blood of animals. Oh, wait. Some of them had gone even from enjoying earthly threat pleasure as the highest pleasure.

You know, I don't know. I know that the the cultural stereotype is that the. The uppity drinkers, you know, one pinky up. I don't know if you do that with wine. I'm not sophisticated enough to have moved in those circles, but the drinkers of the line the the new line has been cut off.

There to whale the brokers of course are going to lead the charge because they depend on it. They live for the drink from morning to evening. And so whether it's those who are wickedly controlled by an earthly pleasure or those who simply had it as their highest pleasure apart from God.

God says wake up. You see God is grieving over his own land. For a nation has come up against my land strong and without number his teeth are the teeth of a lion he has the fangs of a fierce lion he is laid waste my vine language that God uses elsewhere to refer to the people of Israel my Isaiah chapter 5 saying with the fig tree ruined my fig tree Hosea 9 verse 10, he has stripped it bear and thrown it away it's branches are made white here, he's done everything for them to the to use illustration from Isaiah chapter 5, he prepared.

Place and he got rid of all of that things that would stop it from growing all of you who know how to prepare a garden and and you amend the soil with whatever chemicals you need and or no not chemical sorry forgive me, you're kidding yourself calcium is a chemical yeah lie is lime as a chemical.

Another thing for another illustration, but you do everything for it and you're prepared and you and you you plant God says that's what I did for Israel so that I might get from Israel the good fruit of devotion to me and dependence upon me set apart to me and I haven't gotten it.

And so he's giving his people a physical visceral experience of what it is that we do onto him when we don't live or in desperation for him and independence upon him and in delight in him and devotion to him. But the truing locust left the swimming locust is eaten but the swarming locust left the crawling lucas is eating but the crawling hook is left the consuming locust is eaten.

You and all like have you heard about brutx? The bird X is nothing it's just a bunch of free dog food. You know, the Hebrews knew all about locusts. The Hebrew scholars of today and yeah, I give myself the fear quotes as well because we're just we're all just babies attaining, you know, first or second grade level and the language that the people who receive this originally spoke we take the four locust words and we look up stuff about locust plagues and we try to communicate a little bit of how you know, it takes a month and and one locus that laid an egg in June has you know tens of millions of living descendants.

A month later or that they block out the sky and they have can do it so much that this has been recorded even as far as 1200 miles out to sea a locust flag blacking out the sky or we tell not just about every plant particle being laid there, but even a small children being consumed alive by locust plagues and so forth we don't know anything.

About locusts and how bad they are yeah. Hebrew has nine different words for locusts. Of them here there we say oh well, this is probably four different stages in the life of a locust. Where this was a super plague in which four of the worst types of locusts appeared at one time or this was a super plagued series in which one each of those types one after another four in a row.

Just kind of how it reads but we just don't know. What we know is that God considered his land spiritually barren and dead and yet the people were enjoying themselves.

When this isn't just true of Old Testament Israel, is it? Do we not just come through here? In which the vast majority of churches. Didn't have the worship of God at all. Didn't have the assembly. Of the people and the means of grace. At all. The corporate singing in which Jesus in Hebrews 2 says, he is the one who sings his father's praise.

The supper in which he gives himself to us. And the bread. Does this is my body. Confirms his covenant glides us in and assures us. And what did we do? I'm so glad we've got technology. I'm so glad we've got ways of checking up on each other. I'm so glad we can do this.

I'm so glad we could do that the worship of God has been taken from the land and we are able to enjoy ourselves anyway. That's not just the last year. Because it's been generations in our nation. When the wolf of God has not been to enjoy God himself and to know that we are because God himself has given the way that we are worshipping.

We've invaded theories of worshipping because they feel good to us and God forgive us not just to us but to unbelievers. Adding things to the

worship and designing forms of the worship so that those who the Bible tells us and rebellion against God. Are the ones who are determining what we do when we gather as His people.

Is that not the very definition of them that hate me?

But it's not just. Other congregations and our congregation to whatever extent. Our worship isn't as God has prescribed. It's each of us.

Because we judge. How well the worship service went by how it made me feel.

We don't believe what scripture says about Jesus' meeting with us and working in us. It's do I feel more pumped up now. Am I more motivated now?

We need to wake up. Because God and His mercy refuses to weep alone. He says I'm making you weep. Versus four and five so that you can feel. What the grievous hatred of God is against worship. That isn't delighting in him. Second command. Lament.

Lament. It's wedding season. Which when we were younger we observed by the attending of many weddings because that was the season of life we were in. Now we celebrated or observe it by the celebrating of many anniversaries and so forth the picture in verse 8 is. Deeply deeply grievous.

And so he tells us in the first place that we're to lament intensely that were to lament into lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth. For the husband of her youth. You can see the the picture the bridal party and you know, they're all fussing over the bride and you know spreading out her train and fixing her veil and making sure that the hair is still good and the nails are still good and the makeup still good and they're all giggling joyfully and it talking excitedly about the future of the rest of her life with her husband that is beginning today and there's a knock on the dressing room door.

And it's her mother.

In her eyes are red and swollen. And she's got a wardrobe change. In her hand.

It's a grieving garment. We don't. Have grieving garments. We're ignorant of death and grieving and mourning in our culture.

But immediately all the bridesmaids take the hint. They go rushing from the room. Door closes behind the mother of the bride and she explains. He was on the way. And the, Duck truck around the stop sign.

Not much left of him. She'll never see him again in this life. And the giggling and the, Laughter from five minutes ago. Is replaced by a wailing and a screaming. That the bridesmaids in the other room.

And God comes to Israel and He comes to us and He says when you lose the worship of God, or when you lose God Himself in His worship, you should grieve like that.

Where is the greeting?

We anticipate it so little and we value it so little. What Hebrews describes as. The goal the end point of Jesus offering Himself to shed. His blood to consecrate the worship. So that that was set before Him his church in the worship that He as the great climax priests the everlasting priest of all of history would consecrate once and for all so that he would leave his people.

And we barely think of it until Lord's Day morning when you can't find the youngest one's second shoe. We're unfold tilt all day. Saturday. Maybe gather the family for two minutes two hours after everyone's bedtime. When you're beyond exhausted and there's not gonna be enough left tomorrow. So okay, let's pray tomorrow Sunday.

We come and there's five different people that were excited to tell about seven different things. And we spiritually sleep well through the service because. Been addiction time different people seven different things. And we hardly have got himself in his worship. And he says grieve like that young, right? Who never got the wedding.

Or the marriage that followed him.

That is the intensity. Of the lamentation.

I'll walk you through the outline real quick but we'll pick up in verse nine next week really verses four through twenty or a unit no we split it into two because there was so much here.

The leaders of the lamentation. The place where the grain offering or the bread and the wine were first missed outside of the drunkards, of course, you know, the priests have the leadership responsibility and worship and will consider that. Next week so the priests were already grieving because they were the ones who saw the short fall and in the house of God and before them even the field and the land mourned was like Israel are the only ones who hadn't gotten the clue to mourn yet and so they have to be told to awake and to lament and then.

The be ashamed. Versus eleven and twelve the farmers and the vine dressers he were happy so long as they felt fulfilled in their work. And God made it so that they would lose all of the fulfillment. Not just of that which was required for the public worship. But have every particle of everything that they worked so hard for it was as if he was for he was enforcing the curse upon Adam the curse of the ground that it won't

produce or that by sweat it would produce.

With maximized intensity. That he cut off. Every good thing that the ground was producing. But wake up. Wake up and lament.

How easy is it for us not even just to walk through a worship service. But even to miss it. To plan other things and say oh well, you know, it's only a couple of days a year that we do this instead of the assembly. Oh I was gonna be out of town anyway and it would have been so much work to try and find an assembly or.

You know, the only church that seemed to worship biblically was the nearest one was 40 minutes away from the Airbnb or.

Wake up. And lament. And then rejoice. That you're redeemer the Lord Jesus was never in a spiritual coma. He knew. What our worship would cost him. And he went more willingly to the cross. Than we have ever come to this congregation. Because this was the joy that was set before him.

He doesn't suffer the frustration of the farmers and the vine dressers. Those Old Testament priests who relied upon the bread and the wine. Jesus is sufficient in himself. He's offered the ones for all sacrifice, he's done everything this necessary. Well, we need his word. Little bit of wine a little bit of bread.

And his work that he is doing. Will be completed. And so if you are lamenting in Christ and for his sake come to Christ with your lamenting. And see the one. Who has perfectly treasured the worship of God and who has begun a work in you that will not stop.

Until you perfectly treasure it to. Let's pray.

Oh Lord we believe. Help our unbelief.

Because we often are. In the spiritual coma and we don't feel. The loss of your worship. Or the loss of not having you. As the whole of your worship. And we thank you that your spirit. Has given us these words to read and to hear preached. We thank you that he works according to your own mind.

That even now as we pray. And because we do not know how to pray for what we ought. That he intercedes for us with those groans. We thank you for the knowledge that your creation grows. And we pray that we who have the first fruits of your spirit would from your word by his work.

Be taught to groan. Looking forward to the day. When Christ is the firstborn among many glorified brethren. Now those whom you justified. Keep doing that sanctifying work we pray. Sanctifying us by your truth your word is true. Until those whom you have justified you have also glorified. For we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.