

**8/8/15**

**Joel 2:28-29**

## **Hope in Judgment**

**28** *“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.  
29 Even on the male and female servants  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*

*(Pastor Prays)*

As the sands of morality shift under our feet and laws change to accommodate a new morality, Christian people can feel more and more out of place. As Barry Hawkins said, we have become uneasy in Babylon. And Babylon is sort of what it feels like to Christ followers. In so many ways, we have lost trust in the formal institutions that have made our society morally strong.

The church has, by and large, lost its prophetic voice. It's reduced either to pandering to liberalism or preaching a Gospel of narcissism in which the messages are all about *you* and how *you* can be better. Messages that are Osteen-developed and Oprah-approved. The church isn't prophetic. Our government – regardless of party affiliation – is a shadowbox of virtue hanging on a wall of lies. You can't even trust the Boy Scouts anymore.

On a personal level, friendships don't last and marriages don't seem to live and children don't seem happy. And into the bleakness we call life, Joel launches a word of fiery hope. The passage this morning is the most famous in this little book as it's the one that Peter quoted in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost when the *Spirit* of God came to establish the *church* of God so that you and I might find real *hope* in God. I want to explore these two verses and think about why – out of the entire Old Testament – Peter quoted Joel and how Joel 2:28-29 can help me live in modern day Babylon.

### **Regardless of How it Feels, Hope is Not Lost**

Let me tell you why.

#### **We Have a Foundation to Stand On**

This passage in the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament as the foundation of God establishing His church on that day in Acts 2. The Holy Spirit descended and Peter said the Spirit coming fulfills what was written down. What was written down is our foundation. The one constant is an ever-changing universe and the one thing that doesn't change – Every Sunday I quote Isaiah 40:8 before I preach as a reminder to myself and as a confession to you that we are bound by what's been given to us in the

Book, because the grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever.

As believers, our belief in scripture puts us in a really precarious position. Paul told Timothy that very thing in 2 Timothy 4:3-4: He told him: For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears. They will accumulate for themselves teachers who suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. That's never been more true than it is today. That's why it's never been more important for us to be grounded in the Word. There are several things the word does for the believer, summarized in just three words:

### **Comfort**

Psalm 119:50: "This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life." When you feel hopeless, unloved, lost, confused, it's Gods Word that becomes a lamp at your feet and a light for your path.

### **Confidence**

Confidence to live a life that is going the opposite way from everyone else. Students stand against the pressure of sex and apathy. To live for Christ and trust that things are going to be ok. To live rightly and stand strongly with confidence. Psalm 119:11: "I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

### **Conviction**

This may be the most prevalent reason people avoid God's word – conviction. This Book holds up a standard and shows me I can't meet the requirements to please God. My good works won't save me. I need the grace of God found in Christ. It's conviction for believers. In the morning when I read the Bible, I'm reminded of my need and dependence on God's Grace.

All of this to say – you have a foundation to stand on. 30 minutes in of Bible reading or listening in the morning. Use our app. Stop complaining about this world and start studying on God's word. Regardless of how it feels, all hope is not lost. We have a foundation to stand on.

## **We Have a Power to Live By**

The declaration from the Lord in v. 26 is God saying, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." We will deal with the "all flesh" in a moment but let's think about what it means for God to pour out his Spirit.

Pouring out is the imagery of water. In Hebrew the phrase "pour out" carries with it a real sense of an abundance, more than expected.

Here is an illustration. If I'm in a rush or waiting on the peculator to make, I'll use our Keurig to make coffee. And it makes about a half-cup and it never feels like there is enough. I don't want a thimbleful of coffee.

That's just the opposite of the idea here. When God pours out His Spirit, it's a life-giving tidal wave and it changes everything. In fact, in v. 28 it's defined as prophesy, dreams and visions. Those are all describing the same thing. In the Old Testament, all three speak of God revealing himself to His people. This is why Peter said the day of Pentecost was the fulfillment. God came with forcefulness and strength. The same Spirit that was at creation in Genesis 1:2 is the same Holy Spirit at re-creation: conversion. It is in John 3 when Jesus describes being born again. The Spirit being poured out is not accompanied by fantastic and bizarre behavior. The Holy Spirit coming to a person means change. Ezekiel said God's Spirit brings a new heart. Isaiah said his Spirit coming creates a new community. Joel shows us in v. 28 there is a new distinction. These are God's people. There is a new dignity. Notice that in v. 28, sons, daughters, old men, young men; in v. 29 male servants, female servants. The Grace of God extends to *all* people equally.

John the Baptist when he preached about the coming of Jesus said that Christ will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Jesus himself said in John 7:37-38 "On the last day the great day of the feast, Jesus stood up and cried out 'If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" You see, in Christ we have this power to live by, this Holy Spirit in you. As a believer, He's in you. That Spirit, the third person of the trinity, is in you. Here's what the Holy Spirit does. He gives you...

### **Power to Change**

Isn't that what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 5:17 when he said, "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation. The old has passed away behold the new is come." It's what God's Spirit does in us. It takes us to the Cross and the Cross changes us. He gives you the power to change.

### **He Gives You Strength to Obey**

That's the encouragement John gave in 1 John 4:4 when he said "Little Children, you are from God and have overcome. For he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." God gives the power to change, strength to obey.

### **Wisdom to be Still**

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 46:10-11, "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among nations. I will be exalted on the Earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our Fortress" and regardless how it feels to be a believer, all hope is *not* lost.

In Christ, hope is made a reality. God designed you to be His. Christ died so you could be His. The Holy Spirit comes to convict and awaken you. You can be His. Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart. Instead turn from your sin and turn to Christ.

*(Pastor Prays)*