

Joel 2:12-14

Waking up in time!

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, and relenting of evil. Who knows whether He will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him.

Verse 16 says, “Gather the people, sanctify the congregation.” Oh to be honoring the Lord with every part of our lives! It is so easy to think that we are doing well in the Lord and yet be so far from this. I was recently looking at the picture of William Booth’s (Founder of the salvation army) dream about the millions of lost souls in a stormy sea surrounding a small Island where everyone who was safely ashore seemed completely oblivious to the plight of those in the sea and had taken up all kinds of pursuits and entertainments to pass their time. Everyone around us really is drowning but because they don’t realize it they are not calling out to us for help thus making it easy for us to forget the true nature of their condition and carry on with our lives as though we had no better responsibilities than planning dinners for the weekend with friends or any of the many other pursuits we might have.

These verses follow God’s words of warning regarding His imminent punishment of the land and yet here He still holds out His hand saying, “Return to Me with your whole heart.” There is still time to turn the tide once again. God greatly loves us and desires to lavish His love upon us but we are constantly straining against His commandments which brings down the impending calamity upon our own heads. A friend of mine recently said, “Why can’t we be straining in the other direction? Why can’t we be pressing our boundaries in our relationship with God and going deeper into Him than ever before?” These are good words! And God holds out such hope and comfort for all would attempt to do this!

So what does it mean to sanctify the congregation? It means to bring back the Lord to the center of our hearts and letting every idol in our lives fall on their face before Him. God often does this in two ways. One is to make our conscience sensitive once again to sin and the other is to bring down the things that we have placed our trust and love in. (Idols falling on their faces) So to sanctify the congregation is to clear our homes of everything that displeases God so that He might once again be welcome in our home and able to defend us against our adversary who has surrounded us. He will be our defense against all calamity if we will call on His name and submit our lives and our hearts back to Him.

We as the body of Christ need to stand and take these steps first so that everyone around us will see and have someone to follow. If we don’t lead - who else will? We need to look on the things that are in our lives and call sin sin and idols idols and fearlessly chop them down as Gideon did to the family idol that was set up in the center of town. It takes courage and most likely will bring other peoples anger against you, but God Will Be With You! Examine what you watch, examine what you listen to, examine what your goals are and subject all these things to God’s word and to the reality that millions of souls are dying every day while you are busy doing these things.

These are challenging words, but let them inspire you to take action and lead the charge. Let us wake up the body of Christ and do the deeds that we were created to do for the time is short and the days are evil!

God bless you all!

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Written by a fellow servant of Jesus Christ -Seth

