

Text: Joel 2:28-32 (Pew Bible pg.902)

Title: “Survivors”

INTRODUCTION

Open your Bibles to the book of Joel. Today I’m concluding this long series of messages I’ve entitled “Profiting from the Prophets.” I’m so grateful for the tremendous response to this series, and many have asked if it will be possible to purchase the series. There are three ways you can do that: Go to our website travis.org/faith-factor and download them for free. Go to the website and order a CD album for \$25.00. Go to the foyer after the service and place an order to be picked up in 3 weeks. Now I want to begin by reading Joel 2:28-32.

Now v.28 begins with the words “and afterward.” Now Joel, like the other 17 prophets we have studied, has a word from God for His people in a particular historical situation. The challenge here is to know exactly what the situation was in Joel’s day. Some scholars say Joel was one of the first prophets; others say he was one of the last. Either way Joel has a message from God about the circumstances of his day, and also a word from God about something that will happen “afterward” (v.28).

The immediate situation involved the nation of Israel. A *natural* disaster had given way to a *national* disaster. The natural disaster was not a flood, or an earthquake or a tornado. It was a huge infestation of bugs, like grasshoppers, called locusts. And they descended upon the land like a great cloud. They ate everything in sight. Joel describes them like a fierce army invading the land:

Joel 2:5 - With a noise like that of chariots they leap over the mountaintops, like a crackling fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

Part of the reason Joel writes is to challenge the people of God that this disaster was a reminder to them that they needed to return to the Lord and call upon Him. And this is the immediate situation that the prophet of God speaks to. But like many of the prophets, Joel sees an immediate situation that God is speaking to, but then there’s something beyond that.

Joel 2:28 - “And afterward...” – You see, you and I are living in the “afterward.” Joel sees beyond the current circumstances to the time of when God would send His Son to this world to offer salvation to mankind. We know that’s what Joel was speaking about because we read this in Acts 2 in the NT. Fast forward several hundred years to a time just after Jesus was crucified and rose again. It was the Day of Pentecost when Jews had come to Jerusalem from all over the world. The followers of Jesus had gathered together in Jerusalem to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus had promised would come from the Father. As they were praying, the Holy Spirit dramatically came *upon* them and *into* them. Thousands of people saw what was happening and they were amazed. The change was so dramatic that some thought these followers of Jesus were drunk. But the leader, the Apostle Peter, stood up in front of the crowd and explained what was happening. Listen to what Peter said in Acts 2:15-21. Read.

Now Peter goes on to explain what we call the Gospel: Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth. He was crucified by the Romans, but His death was not the death of a criminal. He was dying for the

sins of all mankind. Jesus was buried, and then miraculously, He arose from the grave on Easter Sunday. The Bible says that the people were so convicted by this message that they cried out, “What shall we do?” And Peter answered them:

Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:39 - The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Now notice that carefully ... “for you and your children and for all who are far off...” Those who are far off are you and me. This salvation was not just for the people who lived during the NT times; it’s for all of us, even down to this very day.

And Joel saw all of this, hundreds of years before it happened. So go back with me now to Joel and let’s see what God has to say through him to us today.

Joel 2:32 - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Survivors ... we all want to be survivors.

ILLUSTRATION - Junior Seau was well-known as a passionate NFL superstar who played for the San Diego Chargers. In his 13-year pro football career Seau played in the Pro Bowl multiple times. But nearly two months ago, at the age of 43, Junior Seau suddenly took his own life. His death stunned the NFL world. In an interview with *Sports Illustrated*, his former teammate and friend, Rodney Harrison, talked about the fact that in Junior Seau's last days he was desperately searching for peace. Harrison said: “He would tell me that the only time he truly felt at peace was when he was with his children or in the surf. He would say, ‘When I'm on those waves, it's the greatest feeling. I have no worries, no stress, no problems. I just forget about everything.’ Junior was always searching for peace.” And apparently he never found it.

All of us struggle to know how to survive the challenges we face in life. People are searching for peace. God’s Word shows us how we can be spiritual survivors through the salvation that God provides. Joel is speaking about the salvation that comes to us through Jesus Christ.

So let’s look at it. These verses tell us something about...

1. WHO SAVES US (v.32)

Joel 2:32a - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved...

People who survive are rescued by the Lord. We call on the Lord because He is the only one who can come to our rescue. We know this from the NT as well:

Acts 4:12 - Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

But the Lord doesn't just wait for us to call upon Him. He actually calls us. Joel 2:32 talks about “survivors whom the Lord calls...” God calls those who call on him! The initiative is with God. God calls them, they hear his call and they in turn call upon God. What amazing grace and compassion. Joel describes the Lord in those terms:

Joel 2:13 - Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...

ILLUSTRATION – God is so gracious. You know we talk about God's grace and God's mercy; and there's a difference. Let me explain it this way: Suppose someone broke into your house to rob you and you captured him but then you didn't harm or punish him. That's called “mercy.” However, suppose your intruder cut his arm while he was breaking into your house, and you sat him down and bandaged his arm, and offered him something to eat. That's called “grace.” Mercy is when you withhold something that someone rightfully deserves in the way of judgment. Grace is when you give something to someone they don't deserve in the way of kindness. And you see, you and I are the robbers and God is the owner of the house. When we turn to Christ in faith and repentance, God not only treats us with mercy; He shows us grace.

So the Lord is the one who saves us. But this also tells us something about...

2. WHO CAN BE SAVED (vv.28-29)

Notice that this salvation isn't just for a few privileged people:

Joel 2:28 - “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Joel 2:29 - Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Joel 2:32a - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved

You may wonder, “Can God save me? Can I have that life?” The answer is absolutely yes. No matter what you've done, God can rescue you.

Then these verses also tell us something about...

3. WHAT WE ARE SAVED FROM (vv.30-32)

Now notice that this is not all good news. For the fact is that there is a dreadful day coming that the Bible describes here:

Joel 2:30 - I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

Joel 2:31 - The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Joel sees beyond the first coming of Jesus when He died for our sins and rose again to offer salvation to us all. He looks to the second coming of Jesus Christ when God will judge the world. This day will be dreadful because it is the day of God's judgment against sin. But God provides a way to be saved and delivered.

Joel 2:32 - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

So there are survivors who are saved and delivered from this dreadful judgment. God has provided a way for us to survive that dreadful day in the future. He did it through His Son Jesus Christ.

That's what we are saved from. But we also see something about...

4. WHAT WE ARE SAVED FOR

I want you to understand the amazing thing that happens to us when we are saved. Obviously our sins are forgiven and we get to go to heaven when we die. And these verses describe it in more detail:

- We are saturated (v.28)

Joel 2:28a - "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Joel 2:29b - I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Notice the way God speaks of salvation. It is the Spirit of God poured out. This is not just *something* that comes *upon* us; it is *Someone* who comes *into* us. Jesus Christ actually comes to live in us, to saturate and infiltrate our lives, by His Holy Spirit.

ILLUSTRATION – Paul Jones, who was baptized earlier, told me of how he came to Christ a few weeks ago. He said that he felt something amazing happening within him. Now it doesn't feel the same way for every person who is saved, but sooner or later when Christ comes to saturate a person's life, they feel different on the inside.

Now it says that when the Holy Spirit is poured out and poured in, something else happens:

- We speak (v.28)

Joel 2:28 - "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy...

That word “prophesy” means to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit. One of the things that happened at Pentecost is that those people who were saturated and infiltrated by the Holy Spirit began to speak the words of God. They spoke about what God had done. And the people of the city who had gathered that day were amazed that they heard these Christ-followers speaking of the works of God in a language they could understand.

And when Christ comes to live in your life, and in my life, there’s something for us to talk about. The first thing we want to do is to confess Him before others.

Romans 10:9 - That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:10 - For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Believer’s baptism is where we get to confess that Jesus is Lord and Savior of our lives. But then throughout our lives we are to be witnesses for Christ.

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When Jesus called His first followers He said, “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” We will speak for our Lord every chance we get. So we’re saturated and we speak and also...

- **We see (v.28)**

Joel 2:28 - “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people ... Your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

Now what does this mean? This doesn’t mean that everyone will have weird dreams and visions. I believe that part of what Joel is describing here is what happens when we are saturated and infiltrated by the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them the Spirit would teach them things about Jesus ... the Spirit would help them to understand spiritual things that they couldn’t understand on their own.

Listen, when Christ comes to live within you, this Book, the Bible, will come alive for you through the help of the Holy Spirit.

So we’re saturated, we speak, we see and...

- **We serve (v.29)**

Joel 2:29 - Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Joel saw what happens to people who receive this amazing salvation. They become servants of

God, not just serving themselves.

The Bible says...

Mark 10:45 - For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

So when Jesus comes to saturate and infiltrate our lives He motivates us and mobilizes us to serve. And the happiest you can be is not when others are serving you, but when you are serving others.

CONCLUSION

Now just look at v.32 again:

Joel 2:32a - And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved;

What an amazing invitation! "Everyone" ... the invitation is open to everyone. "Who calls on the name of the Lord" ... that means that you and I can't get in with our own name. We come in His Name. "Will be saved" ... not "might be saved." What a promise!

ILLUSTRATION – A couple of months ago was the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the great ship Titanic. It was called by some, "the ship that not even God could sink." Well on April 14, 1912, the Titanic did sink. It struck an iceberg and in a short time sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic. Over 1,500 people died. Only about a third of the passengers lived to tell of the nightmare. Although the death toll was staggering, the greater tragedy was that many more people could have been rescued. Of the twenty lifeboats lowered overboard, only a few were filled to capacity. Several were less than half full. Meanwhile, hundreds of people floated in the open water wearing life jackets near the twenty unfilled lifeboats.

Friend, there's room in the lifeboat for you. **GUEST CARD**