

Rend Your Heart

Joel 1:1–12; 2:1–27 · This week: I Will Love Them Freely, Hosea 1–6; 10–14; Joel

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 47, “I Will Love Them Freely,” on Gospel Library**



START

A swarm of locusts can strip a whole field in a day. Joel describes wave after wave of them eating everything in the land (Joel 1:4).

READ TOGETHER

Joel told parents to tell the story to their children and grandchildren (Joel 1:3). The locusts were a warning of “the day of the Lord” and a call to turn back to him (Joel 2:1; 2:11–12).

JOEL 2:12–13

¹²Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: ¹³And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

JOEL 2:25–26

²⁵And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. ²⁶And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The Lord said, “Turn ye even to me with all your heart” (Joel 2:12). Then he added, “rend your heart, and not your garments.” People tore their clothes to show grief or sorrow for sin. The Lord wanted the tearing to happen inside, where real change begins.

Joel gives the reason to turn. The Lord “is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness” (Joel 2:13). The Lord described himself to Moses on Mount Sinai in almost the same words (Exodus 34:6), and next week Jonah will use them too.

Joel called everyone to a fast, including elders, children, babies, and even a bride and groom on their wedding day (Joel 2:15–16). Turning back to the Lord was something the whole family did together.

The Lord promised, “I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten” (Joel 2:25). Years lost to sin cannot be lived over, and the Lord can still make up for them. Through Jesus Christ, what was wasted can be restored.

TALK ABOUT IT

What is the difference between looking sorry and being sorry? How can we tell which one is happening in us?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Joel told Israel to rend their hearts, and he promised that the Lord would restore the years the locusts had eaten. The Savior can make up for lost time.