

Establishing A Gathering Culture -Joel 2:10-17

“10 The earth quakes before them (the Babylonian military invasion), the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness. 11 The LORD gives voice before His army, For His camp is very great; For strong is the One who executes His word. For the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; Who can endure it? 12 Now, therefore,” says the LORD, ‘Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.’ 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if (perhaps) He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred (solemn) assembly; gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, 16 gather the children and nursing babes... 17 Let the priests, ...weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, “Spare Your people, O LORD...” (Joel 2:10-17)

I. BHOP VISION #1: TO ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF WHOLEHEARTED LOVE FOR GOD, BASED IN THE CONTEXT OF A 24/7 SACRED ASSEMBLY THAT GATHERS TO FAST, WORSHIP AND PRAY.

- A. 24/7 prayer will be established here!
- B. The prayer movement and the missions movement will come together at Bethany
- C. The Lord said, “I will do it because you ask.”

II. JOEL IS A CRITICAL BOOK TO GET A GRID FOR WHAT THE LORD IS REQUIRING OF HIS PEOPLE IN THIS HOUR OF HISTORY AND SHOWS US WHAT OUR FOCUS NEEDS TO BE.

- A. Jesus said in Matthew 24:7-8 that 2 things would be the "beginning of sorrows", military conflict and natural disasters. The two things that Israel was up against in Joel were a locust plague (natural disaster) and the Babylonian army invading (military conflict). God gives them very clear instruction through Joel as to what their response should be in the midst.
- B. The prayer movement will only make sense in the context of the coming end-time crisis. A biblical understanding of the end times gives us urgency for the hour and gives us context for what the Lord is requiring of us as the hour of His return approaches.

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” (1 Peter 3:7)

“But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake (watch, NKJV) and be sober.” (1 Thes 5:4-6)

- C. We will know the hour of history we are living when we are watching. Living a lifestyle of being fully awake, fully in the light, sober, clean minded. Wholehearted.

III. CRISIS IS COMING.

“1 Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand: 2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any such after them, even for many successive generations.” (Joel 2:1-2)

- A. Unparalleled military invasion. Tremendous crisis. Tremendous pressure will be on the earth at the end of the age Jesus said in Matthew 24:22 that if the days of the Tribulation were not shortened no one would last. No one would survive if the days of the Tribulation were not cut short.

IV. THE DAY OF WHO?

- A. It is the DAY OF THE LORD. Not the day of evil men (although there will be lots of evil men acting wickedly), not the day of Satan (although he will be raging like no time in history), not even the day of disaster (although there will be disaster and chaos like never seen). It is the Lord's day. The great and terrible day of THE LORD.

- B. That crisis is coming and that God is orchestrating it must be reality for us if not the response that the Lord asks of us will seem foolish, radical, and unnecessary if we are not living in the reality of coming crisis.

“Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.” (Joel 1:15)

“How awful that day will be! For the day of the Lord is near; it will come as destruction from the Divine Destroyer.” (Joel 1:15. net Bible)

- C. The locust plague of Joel 1 and the military invasion of Joel 2 both have God as the one who is orchestrating things.

“Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals...” (Rev. 6:1)

- D. Jesus, the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world, is the one opening the seals. He is loosening the judgments of God on the earth. The Lamb that went all the way to have a bride. He is unleashing crisis for the sake of love. His desire it to have a people that will be with Him where He is. Not in brutal but in kindness. He will use the least severe means necessary.

“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24)

- E. He went to the cross for us to be with Him he is releasing the judgments so that we would be fully His. Voluntarily His for eternity.

- F. God is the primary source of the crisis and thus the primary solution to the crisis.

V. GATHER

“12 Now, therefore,” says the LORD, “ Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.” 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if (perhaps) He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him...? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred (solemn) assembly; gather the people, Sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, 16 gather the children and nursing babes... 17 Let the priests, ...weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, “Spare Your people, O LORD...” (Joel 2:12-17)

- A. What do we do in light of the coming day of the Lord? We have a prayer meeting. We cry out for the favor of one Man.
- B. We are to be a people that are wholeheartedly going after the Lord. We will love the Lord with all that we are. (Mat. 22:37)
- C. We are to be a people that fast, weep, and mourn.
- D. We are building an ark of corporate fasting and prayer unto wholeheartedness.
- E. The favor of God is the only answer. God is creating the crisis so He is the solution. His favor. His smile. At the very center of the crisis is a very kind God.

VI. LINKING OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S ACTION

“12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, 14 if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. 16 For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.” (2 Chron. 7:12-16)

“ 1 Gather together, yes, gather, O shameless nation, 2 before the decree takes effect—before the day passes away like chaff—before there comes upon you the burning anger of the LORD, before there comes upon you the day of the anger of the LORD. 3 Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD.” (Zeph 2:1-3)

“6 The word reached the king of Nineveh (the word was the bold preaching of the coming crisis, coming judgment), and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, 8 but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” (Jonah 3:9)

- A. As intercessors we are standing the gap between our nation and the wrath of God. We prayer in confidence because we know He is slow to anger and of great kindness.
- B. Wholeheartedness is the point. He is after our hearts. He will have a fully devoted, pure and spotless bride at the end of the day.

“ 25 ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”(Eph. 5:25-27)

VII. THE 5 FOLD MESSAGE OF JOEL

- A. This is the basic message of Joel and what will be proclaimed by messengers. This essence of the messenger we must get comfortable proclaiming now. This message must be reality to us: **1. The glory is coming, 2. The crisis is coming, 3. Wholeheartedness is required to increase the glory and minimize the judgment, 4. The Judge is a very kind God, 5. History can be changed if you say YES to Him and His solution.**

VIII. 24/7 SACRED ASSEMBLY

- A. A literal perpetual 24 hour a day 7 day a week solemn assembly gives God the opportunity to relent and leave a blessing behind instead the coming disaster in our region.
- B. Night and day prayer is the environment that God is raising up messengers
- C. Going deep in the knowledge of God in the place of hiddenness
- D. Proclaiming what is on His heart boldly and clearly as He gives open doors.

IX. BETHANY HOUSE OF PRAYER: BRINGING THE MISSIONS MOVEMENT AND PRAYER MOVEMENT TOGETHER.

- A. The houses of prayer that Bethany will establish all over the earth (Jaeson Ma in April 2008 prophesied that we would have HOPs in every major city on the earth!) will provide the infrastructure needed in those regions for the church to thrive and not fall away in those days.
- B. A focus of gathering. Wholehearted fasting and prayer that is unto the release apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists, and teachers both locally and around the earth.
- C. These messengers will be living out the culture of the Kingdom (Sermon on the Mt lifestyle. Prayer, fasting, radical giving and acts of service. Matthew 5, 6 and 7)
- D. They will be proclaiming the message of the Kingdom (The coming bridegroom judge will bear the wrath of God for you or dispense it on you) backed up by the power of the Kingdom (signs and wonders).