

“Rejoice!”

Joel 2:18-32

Pastor Johanan Justin

The fundamental cry of God’s heart is for His people to return to Him. A second cry on God’s heart is for His people to rejoice.

How are we to rejoice?

1) Rejoice with your eyes open

The calamity that the Israelites had experienced not only revealed how far their hearts were from God, but also drained them of their joy (Joel 1:12). The Israelites believed that they had everything needed for happiness outside of God. When calamity came, the happy things they did independently of God (‘happiness projects’), were taken away. Their eyes were opened to the truth that the world is broken – a place of sorrow, loss, sin, and death.

Calamity is God’s mercy towards us. Through calamity, God forces us to thoroughly review our priorities and goals in life and pursue joy with our eyes open. We all have ‘happiness projects’ we pursue with our eyes closed. We shut our eyes to the truth that these projects will never give us the joy we need and demand too high a price from us. God cries out to us to pursue His joy with our eyes open. Rejoice with your eyes open!

2) Rejoice with your hands open

v19 - As the people returned to God with misery, God responded to them with mercy. Despite the rebelliousness of the people, God received them back without a hint of displeasure and condemnation. Instead, He lavished on them all they needed. God took great pains to restore in detail all that was lost because of the calamity (v25). He calls on His people, even as they returned to Him, to rejoice with their hands open.

God invites us to come to Him for joy. He is the giver of every single thing we need and desire. There is not one blessing that comes our way apart from God (James 1:17). As you return to God, rejoice with your hands open (Ps. 145:16)!

3) Rejoice with your hearts open

In the Bible, God’s gifts are meant to reveal who He is. They are meant to lead us to His face. Rejoicing in His gifts will lead us to rejoice in His character. God spoke to His people to rejoice not only in the gifts, but also in Him (v23).

He reveals 2 things about Himself to rejoice about (v27):

#1 God is with us. Rejoice because He is here with us!

#2 The One and only God is our God. Not only is God with us, He is also for us – rejoice!

v18 – Our God is jealous for us. His heart breaks to see us lost. Each and every ‘happiness project’ we pursue outside of God is a spiritual affair we commit against Him. His hot jealousy demands our destruction. Yet, it is His same jealousy that leads Him to mercy and compassion. As the perfect Husband, He lovingly restores and receives back His wife. As you open your hands to receive His blessings, open your heart to adore and worship the true and only God!

4) Rejoice with your mouths open

vv28-32 – God gives an astounding promise to His people: He would pour out an abundance of His Holy Spirit upon *all* of them! No longer would they need prophets – they would all know God and His heart, hear from Him, and love Him for themselves! And their fear would be replaced with joy on the day of judgement.

God’s promise to pour out His Spirit upon all flesh has been fulfilled through Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:11)! When we give our life to Him, not only are we saved; the Holy Spirit is poured out into our hearts (1 Cor. 6:19). Cast away the ‘happiness projects’ and return to God! Abide in Him, for there is the fullness of joy (Jn. 15:7, 11)! Rejoice with your mouths open in awe!