**Rend Your Heart, Not Your Garments**

*Joel 2:13*

**Introduction**

1. Joel depicts a graphic scene of destruction among the Israelite nation.
   1. A hoard of locusts invaded the land, destroying everything in their path – described as a nation, great army.
      1. Desolation – **Joel 2:3**
      2. Never been anything like it – **Joel 2:2-3**
   2. This affected the entire nation, from the priests, to the farmers, to the animals who had no pasture.
      1. Description of anguish – **Joel 2:6**
      2. Not even provisions for offerings to the Lord – **Joel 1:8-10, 13**
   3. This was a partial judgment from the Lord for sin in the nation.
      1. Call to repentance – **Joel 1:14**
      2. They could not come before God with joy and gladness because of sin – **Joel 1:16**
   4. This judgment foreshadowed greater, and ultimate destruction if they did not repent.
      1. Day of the Lord – **Joel 1:15** – phrase used to indicate ultimate judgment upon sinful nations, including Israel. A day where God manifests Himself in judgment to overthrow His enemies.
      2. Trumpet for warning – **Joel 2:1-2**
   5. Lest this awful day of greater judgment come upon them (foreshadowed by the locust invasion) they were called to repent.
      1. Call to repentance for all – **Joel 2:12-14**
      2. Promise of physical blessings, including the removal of the locusts – **Joel 2:18-20**
      3. Promise for spiritual blessings “afterward” **– Joel 2:28-32** (Fulfilled on Pentecost – **Acts 2:14-21**)
2. The Lord’s call to repentance included an important phrase – **Joel 2:13**
3. Repentance is not some superficial outward display. It is an action of the heart, as all things pertaining to the service of God should be.
4. The way we respond to God’s call to return from sin to His service is vitally important. We must “rend our hearts, not our garments.” (This principle should be understood and applied in our everyday life as well – penitence is not something we merely possess when we sin, but even continually to avoid a return to sin.)
5. An Appeal for the Inward Man
6. God stressed over and over to His people that He wanted their hearts, not actions devoid of spiritual substance – **Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 51:16-17**
7. They were guilty of leading a double life, and assuming the outward actions covered their sin even though their heart hadn’t changed – **Jeremiah 7:8-11**
8. When God called them to repentance, He didn’t want a superficial outward display, but a true change – **Joel 2:13**
   1. Not forbidding the actual rending of garments. Such occurred many times in sincerity of raw anguish and sorrow:
      1. When Reuben found out his brothers sold Joseph as a slave – **Genesis 37:29**
      2. When Jacob was told the lie that Joseph had been devoured by a beast – **Genesis 37:33-34**
      3. Job when he heard the news of losing his property and family – **Job 1:20**
      4. When Josiah discovered and read the book of the Law and knew the people were in sin – **2 Kings 22:11** (associated with godly sorrow and penitence)
   2. However, such was known to be associated with deep sorrow and repentance, and was abused by some who weren’t truly penitent, but sought to appear as though they were.
      1. Rending garments wouldn’t take care of the problem.
      2. Only rending the heart would.
9. An Appeal for Godly Sorrow
10. God wants us to be sorrowful for our sin, but there is a distinct difference between godly sorrow, and sorrow of the world – **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**
    1. Godly – godward piety/reverence/thought.
       1. Due to this Godward attitude, such leads to repentance.
    2. Sorrow of the world – sorrow stemming from carnal thoughts.
       1. Sorry you got caught.
       2. Sorry you are expected to quit.
       3. Sorry, but unwilling to change.
11. Consider the difference between Peter and Judas Iscariot.
12. Sorrow can only be identified as “godly” when it is followed by godly actions:
    1. Fruit worthy of repentance – **Matthew 3:8** (John to the Pharisees and Sadducees)
       1. Repentance – *metanoia*, “afterthought, change of mind, repentance,” (VINE)
       2. “bear fruits worthy of a change of mind” – a change of mind will manifest itself in a change of actions.
    2. From the heart proceeds our actions – **Matthew 15:18-19; Proverbs 4:23**
13. An Appeal for Repentance – Rend Your Heart
14. How does one rend their heart? What does the heart entail according to scripture?
    1. Intellect
       1. The heart thinks – **Genesis 6:5-6** (antediluvian world)
       2. The heart reasons – **Mark 2:8** (Pharisees when Jesus forgave)
       3. The heart understands – **Matthew 13:15** (explanation of Sower)
       4. The heart believes – **Acts 8:37** (Ethiopian Eunuch)
    2. Will
       1. The heart intends – **Hebrews 4:12** (word of God divides)
       2. The heart purposes – **2 Corinthians 9:7** (contribution)
       3. The heart obeys – **Romans 6:17** (Obedience to gospel, death of old man)
       4. The heart loves – **Matthew 22:37** (Greatest command)
    3. Aspiration
       1. The heart desires – **Romans 10:1** (Paul’s thoughts for Jews); **Matthew 6:21** (treasure in heaven)
       2. The heart trusts – **Proverbs 3:5** (trusts in God’s promises, and that following Him will be worth it)
15. “Such a penitent rends and ‘rips up by a narrow search the recesses of the heart, to discover the abominations thereof,’ and pours out before God ‘the diseased and perilous stuff’ pent up and festering there, ‘expels the evil thoughts lodged in it, and opens it in all things to the reception of divine grace’…’This rending then is the casting out of the sins and passions.’” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Joel 2:13)
    1. **2 Corinthians 13:5** – self-examination as to whether you are in the faith.
    2. Intellect – are your thoughts, reasonings, understandings, and beliefs according to God’s word.
    3. Will – are your intentions, purposes, and actions according to God’s word. Does your will reflect a love of God, or the world?
    4. Aspiration – are your affections, ambitions, and desires on things of the earth, or in heavenly treasure? Do you trust God that such is worth the sacrifice?
    5. The one filled with godly sorrow is he who realizes the sinful content of his intellect, the sinful actions of his will, and sinful aspirations these reflect.
       1. Bears fruit worthy of repentance (a changed mind) – **Matthew 3:8**
       2. Purifies his heart, which necessitates a cleansing of sinful actions – **James 4:8**
    6. Such will go about, in a true change of heart/mind, changing these matters of the heart to reflect God’s will:
       1. Intellect – **Psalm 119:9-11; 1 Timothy 4:13, 15-16; Philippians 4:8**
       2. Will – **Romans 6:13; Ephesians 5:15-16; Galatians 2:20; 6:14**
       3. Aspiration – **Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 3:7-14**
16. Is the heart rent when:
    1. One “comes forward” because their sin has found them out, but they exhibit no diligence, and continue in their ungodly ways?
    2. One expresses feelings that they needed a sermon, or that it was preached to them, or their toes were stepped on, but they do nothing to address the problem?
    3. One regularly attends worship, and participates in all acts, but returns to a life of ungodliness, and lack of spiritual content outside of worship?
17. The Result of a Rent Heart
18. The call to rend the heart was followed with the reason being God’s mercy – **Joel 2:13-14**
    1. God responded to Israel’s penitence with the removal of the locusts, restoration of the land (physical blessings), and future spiritual blessings of the outpouring of the Spirit in the Messianic kingdom.
19. God’s call for us to sorrow is not for us to remain in such, but for us to be relieved by His lovingkindness – **Matthew 5:3-4**
20. God vows to revive the contrite heart, and give peace to the soul who turns away from sin, and back to Him – **Isaiah 57:15-21**
21. Unless we humble ourselves in God’s sight in this way we will not be lifted up – **James 4:10**

**Conclusion**

1. God requires us to change our hearts entirely when we sin, so as to be fully devoted to Him.
2. We will not fool God by a superficial, outward display of sorrow or righteousness.
3. He knows the hearts of all, and thus knows those who are His – **2 Timothy 2:19** – those who depart from iniquity.
4. Let us rend our hearts, and not our garments!