

Joel 2:12–17

Allured to True Repentance by God's Gracious Character

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Main idea: The Lord makes us grieve our having turned from Him, so that seeing His gracious character we will turn to Him in the way that He says to do so.

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 He will turn and relent,
And leave a blessing behind Him—
A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?
¹⁵ Blow the trumpet in Zion,
Consecrate a fast,

Call a sacred assembly;
¹⁶ Gather the people,
Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should rule over them.
Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Introduction: What is true repentance? This is one of the most important questions in your life. Have you truly repented?

1. **Not just from sin, but to God.** "Turn to Me." "Return to Yahweh your God." Often, we focus upon from what we are to repent. But the focus here is almost entirely upon to Whom we are to repent. The main thing, after all, isn't leaving the sin—though that is absolutely necessary. The main thing is coming to the Lord!
2. **Entire and sincere.** "with all your heart. With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart and not your garments." There are half-hearted things that look like repentance but aren't. There's repentance that has the appearance of intensity and the indicated actions, but isn't genuine. But the Lord commands repentance that is complete (v12b—all your mind), intense (v12c), and genuinely from the soul (13a).
3. **Because of the character of God.** "For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm." How wonderful this God is to Whom we are turning! Look at His graciousness! Look at how merciful/compassionate He is! Look at how patient and slow to anger! Look at His exceeding covenant love! Look at His forgiveness! How dreadful that we would have sinned so greatly against such a God! Truly, this is a God worth turning to, and He is worthy of the glory that we will magnify by turning to Him!
4. **With sure hope that He will freely bless.** "Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him—a grain offering and a drink offering for the Yahweh your God? Repentance does not manipulate Him or force His hand (indeed, He is the One Who gives it, cf. Ac 11:18). Rather, it lays hold of His freedom in which He delights to display the character described in v13 (cf. Rom 9:23–24). We know that He loves to forgive, so we play into His free pleasure when we come to Him in repentance.
5. **As a member of the holy congregation of His people.** vv14c–d present public worship as the desired blessing. v15 sounds the alarm again (cf. v1), but now it is not to arms but to corporate worship. The assembly includes all, regardless of age/ability or preoccupation. The entire holy assembly. The people. The congregation. The elders. The children. The nursing babes (there's no one too young/unable). The bridegroom and bride (there's no one too busy or with a higher-priority activity). Though each must repent from the core of who he is, with all that he is, if you haven't become part of His holy assembly you have not biblically repented. The truly repentant are not just those who have turned from sin, but especially those who have been gathered unto the Lord with His people.
6. **Through God's priests who are to use God's words.** The priests go between. And part of the encouragement about this repentance is that the God Who gave the priests to lead the repentance has also given the words by which to repent. Ultimately, God has given us Jesus as our Priest through Whom we come to Him. And He has given us an entire Bible of Jesus's words with which to do so (cf. 1Pet 1:11). Repentance is through God Himself and for God Himself. For His people. For His heritage. For His honor among the nations and the peoples.

Conclusion: The Lord makes us grieve our having turned from Him, so that seeing His gracious character we will turn to Him in the way that He says to do so. O turn to the Lord, entirely and sincerely, for His great graciousness is glorified by receiving You and blessing You, together with all that holy assembly, whom He has set apart for His own glory!

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Come now to continue worshipping our glorious. God in the hearing of his word preached. For which we come to Joel chapter 2 verses 12 through 17 by his help. Let us ask for that help with spray.

Indite our God we. Borrow our life our breath from you we depend upon you for daily bread. And our souls are even needier than our bodies. So we ask now for that ministry of your spirit. In which you grant not only the alarm at our sin and our guilt and our danger.

That you gave us from your word last. Lord's Day. And you know how fickle and easily dulled we are spiritually. So we pray even for the renewed sense of that alarm. And now as we come to a portion of your word in which you will lure us and attract us to yourself.

We pray that your spirit would grant that work in the heart. In which we would see you in the display of yourself that you make. In this portion of Scripture in which we would hear and receive and follow. Your instruction. For turning from sin and turning to you. In which we are led by your priest to has gone between you and the people and has offered himself a sacrifice.

Who also is the king who sits in the midst of the throne as the lamb. Who also is the prophet who speaks from heaven and whose blood speaks better than that available. And so glorify Christ and make us to hear him. And produce by your spirit that which is from him in us by the preaching now.

And so we ask. And special work of your grace for the one who preaches on earth. That indeed his service would be in accord with how you have called preachers and how you have commanded preaching. But what has said would be from your word. That we would hear not merely the voice of an under shepherd.

With the you had sustained him in faithfulness. That we who are the sheep of the good shepherd the great shepherd who has laid down his life for us. Would know him hear his voice follow him. Which we ask even in his name the great name of Jesus. Amen. Let us rise as we hear the word of God read.

Joel chapter 2. Verses 12 through 17. These are God's words.

Now therefore says Yahweh. Turn to me. With all your heart.

With fasting. With weeping. And with mourning. So rain your heart. And not your garments. Return to Yahweh your God. For. He is gracious. And merciful. Slow to anger. And of great kindness. And He relents from doing all. Who knows if he will turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him.

Agreeing offering and a drink offering for Yahweh God. Blow the trumpets. Consecrate a fast. Call a sacred assembly. Gather the people. Sanctify the congregation. Assemble the elders gather the children and the nursing base. Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber and the bride from her dressing room. Let the priests who minister to your way, weep between the porch and the altar.

Let them say. Spare your people are ylay and do not give to reproach that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the people's? Where is their God?

Lessons this reading of God's written words, which are authoritative and effective active and sufficient. We pray that he will add his blessing to the preaching of it as well. Please be seated.

What is true repentance?

Do word study. And say it's a change of mind to complete change of direction.

We can observe the fruit that comes from it. We are to do good works that our fruit and keeping with repentance.

We can think of it being a turning from and a turning to there many things we can say about true repentance many things we can say about what true repentance looks like. Grieving and weeping there have been a lot of actions commanded in the first two chapters of this prophecy.

One of the things that he makes reference to in the passage before us the tearing of the garments you'd be familiar with if you've read your Bibles a fair amount and how tear their clothes when they grieve there's a grieving over our sin another places things like putting ashes on the head.

I grew up attending certain retreats and rallies and things and which they would get a bunch of us together and we would behave in a way on the surface that looked very emotionally intense and we would sound repentant. Further along I got and the more reformed I got the more doctrine was added in when we talked about these things and.

The emotion the doctrine isn't bad.

The difference it would have made. In our lives and in the church and just because of the sheer number of us in the church that I grew up in in our city would have been stupendous. Would have been.

But as vitally important. That we not only know. But experience. True repentance. We got some of the great necessity of that last week when we were hearing about the day of the Lord. And how it was a day of alarm and a day of danger and a day of destruction and that this was not being announced to the other nations this was being announced to Israel.

That the church has those in it. Who need to hear about and experience true repentance. A day that they thought was going to be a day of great gladness. And up for them a day of great destruction. Well, that is the theme of the passage here. What is true repentance?

And as the Lord describes it to us under these six points. Lord willing we trust in the Lord to complete them. As the Lord describes it to us in these six points. The great question for each one of us here this morning. Is not just what is true repentance.

But have I truly repented? Am I hearing in this passage about a work with which I am familiar? For which I am thanking God and which individually for all who have truly repented we will be asking God to renew and strengthen in us. For the whole of the Christian life as a turning from our sin.

An turning to our gracious God. But if what is described is not something with which you are familiar by not just doctrine but experience and something that he has begun in you and that you are crawling out to him even as we hear that it would be renewed in you and strengthened in you.

If you don't have a reference point for these six things. Then we go out the Holy Spirit grant to you. That these would be words of salvation and he would give you today that which he is describing. In this passage. Very briefly just listing them and then we'll see them in the passage and hear them preach from the passage to repentance as a turning not just from our sin, but especially to our God.

That true repentance is entire. And sincere. That is to say it is all at once for all that you are. That's not sanctification sanctification is growth and it comes. Different paces and has never complete in this life, but to repentance as entire and it's also sincere. Is not just on the surface.

True repentance is a turning to God because of the character of the God to whom we turn. It's because of the character of God in the third place. So not just from sin, but to God his entire and sincere it's because of the character of God. It is with a sure hope.

That he is pleased to bless or as you have it in the outline that he will freely bless. It is in the fifth place as a member of the holy congregation of his people. So it is very sincere and intense. We saw some of that and the class this morning as Zachariah chapter 12 the intensity expressed by the by itself and the by themselves of the verses that we were looking at.

In our passage in the sermon now and this portion of his word, he emphasizes the corporate nature as a member of a holy congregation. Of God's people. And then in the last place as one led by God's priests using God's words. Or as we know now with our great high priest.

As one led by God's priest capital B. Using God's words. So in the first place true repentance is not just from sin but to God verse 12, he says now therefore says Yahweh this utterance of Yahweh or says Yahweh. It's one of the great features of the latter prophets what we would ordinarily call the prophetic books the way we have grown accustomed to dividing up our our the Old Testament as we understand it, but actually from Joshua through Kings is the former prophets.

In the Hebrew Bible and Isaiah and on is the latter prophets and one of the one of the characteristic phrases in the latter prophets is an utterance of Yahweh or thus says Yahweh, this is the only place in the book of Joel that this phrase appears. And so in the way that the Holy Spirit has given us this particular book within the section of the books of the Bible that the Spirit is giving us.

He draws. Tension to this portion of this prophecy that we have before us this morning. And he says now and he gives it in the first person even on the lips and from the pen of Joel but it is Yahweh

speaking and other ends of Yahweh to me. We often think about Santa I think our repentance I think in terms of what we're turning from.

We have been under conviction. There's a particular sin of which we are repenting and from which we are repenting and sadly and grievously for many of us it's often that same sin from which we have turned many times and which has been to us one of our greatest griefs to sin that we have had a very difficult time casting away in which as the apostle says so easily entangles we often think of repentance primarily in terms.

Of that from which we are turning. In fact, we heard a sermon from this passage in this room not too long ago and the title of the entire sermon was what if you're not told what to repent from or what to repent of the emphasis in this passage is not on the from what except that within the scope of the whole book one of the great problems is has been that they have been satisfied with their life and their food and their drink and the grain offerings and the drink offerings and the public services but they were not satisfied with God himself in all of those things and so he has taken he has taken those things away from them so that all of their other joys have been taken from them so that he can become again bring them to the place again where he will be their great capital J in all of the smaller joys of life, including the joys of his public work.

Shop that he himself would be the joy of all things. So the emphasis here is not from what we turn in our repentance but to what and it's all question with whom answer to boom do we turn Turn to me with all your heart. He says in the second line of verse 12, and then in the second line of verse 13 return to your way your God.

The focus here is entirely upon two whom we are to turn. You see the main thing after all isn't just leaving sin but turning to God for if you turn from one sin and you haven't turned to God. If he is not your creator and the reason for your existence if being made in his image and displaying his glory is not the purpose of your life, then whatever else you have put away you still have not or put off you.

Still have not put on Christ Jesus. You still have not truly repented and said it is not just turning away from our sin it's turning to the Lord returning to the Lord. So in the first place to repentance isn't just a turning from sin, but a turning to God.

To repentance isn't just a turning from sin but a turning to God and the second place it is entire and sincere. Turn to me, he says in verse 12 with all your heart. Now with that, we would recover a little bit of the Hebraic the Hebrew mindset the Old Testament use of the idea of heart so that when.

Young and having matured enough to be considering marriage boy number one says to young but having matured enough to be considering marriage and and having gone through some of the steps of preparation girl number two when he says, I love you with all my heart he would not just mean with all love frothy intensity of feeling beside myself that I can muster the the heart was the location in the Old Testament use of the word and the Hebrew mind for all of the faculties of the soul the intellect the feelings the will this would be just as much.

Turn to me with all your mind turn to me with all your guts with all your stomach and all your will with all your determination, this is the whole of who you are this is entire turn to me at every faculty of of who you are turn to the Lord and and he wants it to be intense.

And sincere with fasting with weeping and with mourning there's an intensity here we need to recover the preaching of turning from and having grief and hatred for sin so that we will be those blessed ones who mourn so that the comfort of the gospel will not merely be the comfort of feeling better about myself or having more hope for how things are going to go in my life from now.

On but it will be a comfort that corresponds to our having learned over our sin against God that we would look on him who is saving us and how he is pierced not only at the cross but with every stab we have given every sin we have committed being just as if the the son who is coming into his kingdom goes off for the formal court proceedings and we send a delegation to the same proceedings that.

Which Jesus is receiving the kingdom from his father and we send the delegation saying we will not have this man to rule. Every time you or I. Want to think. The way we feel like thinking. Instead of the way the scripture says to were feel the way we feel like feeling or speaking.

As if our words and our lips and our conversations belong to us to accomplish our goals instead of his. Let alone act. We send that delegation we say we will not have him to rule over us we pierce him. We need to recover the preaching of repentance we need to recover the experience of repentance.

The call a worship service. For crying together. In the passage before us.

Such worship services are almost unknown now, aren't they?

In the churches with which we are familiar. Not praise. God all over the world. But it is not just entire with the whole self especially from the center of the self and the soul. But intense and sincere. As you comes in verse 13, he says, Don't just tear the clothes.

Worship service has been called for fasting and weeping and mourning they know what that means in their culture and so they come dressed for lotion not suit and tire polo shirt and khakis are. Hawaiian shirt and strike shorts or. Whatever people think that you dress for worship.

You ought to dress well for worship. But your heart. Ought to be dressed equally well. And so they're called to a worship service of fasting and so they come dressed well they come with their clothes torn kids they didn't even get trouble with mom for that. I mean, they're gonna spend the next several days helping mom men to close clothes weren't disposable in their culture, but they got to tear their clothes.

And perhaps even a kid would think it's fun to tear their clothes or perhaps a kid who learns to dress up for worship thinks it's fun and it can be to put on the nice shirt and the tie and shine the shoes. Know some kids who learned to shine shoes this week.

But then they get to worship. Are you as interested in dressing your heart for worship? That you are getting your heart clean and ready. That you're the clothes you put on your body say we are gonna go and appear in the assembly that hopes to join the glorious assembly in heaven before the great king.

Do you prepare your thoughts? Do you come ready to learn God's Word and change the way you're thinking about things from the Bible. You come to lift your feelings to him. Do you come knowing as that you are going to receive instruction? You're getting the briefing before the mission.

So you're going to pay good attention to find out God says to do. So he comes he says don't just tear the garments. Tear your heart. Tear the whole of who you are that it would be broken down and ready. Entire. And sincere the Lord romantic the Lord commands repentance, that is complete.

And intense. And genuinely from the soul. So it's in the first place at turning primarily not not so much about what it's from, although it must be from all of your sin, but to primarily it's about to whom you turn. And then in the second place that it is entire and intense and sincere.

And the third place that it is motivated in great part because of the character of God. Some of you have just recently memorized in your shorter catechisms. What is repentance into life? Repent and sent to life includes yes grief and hatred of your sin, but also especially apprehension of the mercies of God in Christ.

In the context of the book of Joel there's God standing in the city at the head of this vast army of the hundreds of millions of locusts and he has come not as a savior but as a judge and a destroyer and it is a day of cloud and darkness and terror and destruction.

And now Joel says look again. Because the same God who is that infinite in his holiness and that exact and full in his justice and in his wrath has a part of his character that is equally infinite and equally perfect and that he even prioritizes displaying.

Four he is gracious and merciful. Slow to anger and if God kindness and he relents from doing harm. If you know your Bible's. You remember Exodus chapter 34 and you remember the context Moses had been up on the mountain and the people of Israel had been down below and they had seen the thunder and the darkness and the small and the fire.

They had as like and they had said Moses. We don't want to hear that anymore we will die you go up and you listen to him and we'll stay here and Mrs. Winter but he took a while and you remember what they did at the bottom of the mountain children when Moses is up there.

They made golden calves or they made a golden calf and they said tomorrow is a feast to Yahweh. And they had this Yahweh the Savior feast using the golden calf.

The outcome of it, what is that? God is so furious that at one point he tells Moses to get out of his way so that he can destroy them. And Moses prays. And he says very similarly to the end of our passage that is before us this morning exodus 32 to 34 really in the background here things like why should they say among the people's where is their God if you do this now, oh God the nations are going to say oh he just brought them out to destroy them.

Your salvation will receive a black eye, oh God. And God listened to Moses praying for the forgiveness of his people and he forgave them and Moses in his boldness asks God for one more thing and what does he ask he asks for God to reveal himself to him to show himself to him so God hides Moses between the rock and the hard place whenever you hear I'm between Iraq and the hard place to remember exodus 34 and where God hid Moses and he makes his glory to pass by and as a as the terror end of the display of his glory passes by your.

Way declares his own name. And it's in very very similar words isn't it to these words from our text he is gracious and merciful slow to anger and of great kindness and he relents from doing harm. He is gracious he shows favor you remember Genesis 6 God about to judge the whole world and then it says of the one man and it's the same root as it is here, you know, most of our translations say favor but it's grace no one found grace in the eyes of Yahweh, yes every thought of his every intention of the fault of his heart were only evil until and that continually until Noah found grace or to put it.

More exact in the order of salvation until grace found. Noah. Here's the god of holy raffle just destruction in the midst of his people at the front of his army. And he has his prophet announced. He always gracious. And merciful he's compassionate even when God is sending to to Judah the the a message of warning and terror and imminent destruction on the lips of Ezekiel and the pen of Ezekiel multiple times in that book he says Turner is real, why will you die do I have any?

Place of the wicked. God has pleasure in his holiness. God has pleasure in his justice that has pleasure even in his wrath.

And yet there is something in the character of God that is expressed to us using words of emotion. God being unchanging not having properly emotions in and of himself but having created us with emotions so that we will know how he in all of his perfections relates to us when we are sitting when we are repenting.

When we are by his grace loving him and obeying him and serving him. And he says, I just love to display my mercy the same order priority in God's display of himself has been Romans chapter 9. Romans chapter 9 one of these portions of scripture that those who are resisting the truth of God often have the hardest time with because God's word tells us the when we sinned in our first father.

Adam we fell all the way and that there is no seeking God in in a sinner or from a sinner. That seeking God can only come by God seeking us and choosing. God can only come by God's choosing us and yet God loves to display his character. And certain verse 22 of them is chapter 9, he says what if God wanting to show his wrath?

And to make his power known those are things he wants. There's a perfections. God isn't embarrassed of his wrath and you shouldn't be either. But he places a greater priority on the display of other perfections. Not that one of his perfections is greater than the other. But that in what he is doing in the history of his saving man, he himself puts the priority of the display of the one over the other.

It's the same as the infinite calculus of his wrath being glorified for unending ages, and it won't end in hell. And his wrath being fully glorified in a few hours. And there is a greatness of his display in Christ and the cross. In the display of those perfectionists. He says what if God wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known endured with much longer suffering vessels of wrath prepared for destruction and that.

When to understand it well or better we would we can stick the words in order in there and in order that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy. Which he prepared beforehand for glory. So those of you who are rightly holding to what we call the doctrine of double predestination.

That there are those who are predestined by the will of God to be saved whom he chose to save even from the hell that they deserve and that there are those whom he wills to pass over they are prepared for destruction. There is a priority on the display of the mercy in those who may saves and we have that priority enjoy chapter 2 that is not embarrassed of the description that he gives of himself in the 11 verses we heard preached last week.

He is wholly and just and full of wrath. But he prioritizes the display of himself that we have in the sixth verses that we have before us this week. He is gracious and merciful. Slow to anger. And of great kindness. Slow to anger and of great steadfast love covenant love.

The fury of God. Against our sin. Is greater than your right and just indignation against the increasing abominations of the culture around us. Everything that you see. Unspeakable things. And

hear about narculture. All of the fury you muster and you say, how can God put up with that? Gearing people sincere Christians at home.

Jesus has got to return now because I can God put up with that.

But the God of the wrath and holiness of the book of Joel, how could he have ever? Put up with any event. When he pulls back the curtain just a little bit and presses upon us as holiness just a little bit and his justice and his wrath just a little bit.

We should say among all the other things we say to him how slow to anger are you God. And we've just read haven't we in Romans chapter 9. The reason for that slowness. Because he is determined to save the vessels prepared for mercy and to display his glory on them as we studied how long passages recently and in Revelation chapter 6 and we looked at the end of Hebrews 11 in the beginning of Hebrews 12 is the return of Jesus waiting for.

What we have seen is that the timing of history the events of history are driven by God's determination to bring to his salvation and to bring fully into the salvation that he is bringing them all those upon whom he has set this electing love the saving love this mercy.

And so he gives us in that line in verse 13 and the one hand slow to anger. And the other hand end of great cussed covenanted love. That love that has determined from all eternity in the sun to save the saints.

This is the God. To whom we are called to turn. He is a God, who relents from doing harm? Because he has bound himself by his character and his purpose and his oath. To love people forever. And he will not lose any one of those upon whom he has set that saving that covenanted love in the bond between the Father and the Son by the Spirit from all eternity.

But this is the God. Against whom we have sinned.

And so the display. Of how merciful he is and how patient he is and how gracious he is and how he binds himself in love to creatures and not just creatures but sinners. You see it's one part of the truth that Jesus was focusing on in the parable when he said bring this enemies of mine and slay them here before me.

But there is a host of enemies that no man can number for whom the great king before he went to receive the kingdom.

Having been sent by his father to do so turns to his father and he says, For those enemies of mine. Who are those loved ones of ours? Slaughter me before you. That they may be my servants and receive my kingdom with me.

The Lord Jesus was slaughtered. In that steadfast love. And the God who is determined to do this from all eternity is the one against him we sin. In every one of our sins.

Jesus went more willingly to the cross than you or I have ever obeyed our parents. Or loved our neighbors or told the truth. Or been content instead of coveting. Or loved the Lord's day. Or used his name with reference or worshiped as he says to. Or any of the commandments.

This is the God not just whom we've sinned against and so how we should hate that sin and turn from it. But this is the God to whom you turn when you're repent he loves to receive your repentance and we should love for his grace to be glorified when we turn to him and his mercy to be glorified when we turn to him and his patience to be glorified when we turn to him.

And his steadfast love to be glorified. When we turn to him truly, this is a God worth turning to. And if you have heard his gospel proclaimed. You come to the last day. And you didn't even turn to such a God as this. You didn't turn even to such a God as this.

Then will not you're having refused him. Have been the capstone of all of your sins.

If you arrived on that day a murderer and an adulterer. And having committed all manner of the alphabet soup of perversion that plagues our culture and having been a thief and a liar. And the person swear and one who worshipped always the way you felt like and didn't care what God said worship was.

Treated the Lord's day as the day that set apart from other things for yourself because you don't find rest in God you find rest in all of the creatures the creative things rather than you arrive at the judgment you've done all of those things. But on top of all of them you heard about his grace and his love and his patience and his mercy.

And even to such a God as that he still wouldn't turn from your sin to him. That will have been the worst of all of it. But if you have turned and if you have seen who he is and what he is like and this and other scriptures. And you have said oh Lord you are worth turning to for you are gracious you show favor even to such a sinner as I am and you are merciful and compassionate what happens to me mattered to you even though I had sinned against you and you are slow to anger you are patient and didn't destroy because you were determined to save me and all the others upon whom you had set that love and you are full you have great steadfast love.

There is nothing that can stop or hinder or frustrate or turn away your saving love of God for this given in covenant in yourself you abound yourself to it even our sin and our guilt couldn't stop but you said Christ to the cross you came as Christ upon the cross for us.

Then the character of the God. Who displayed himself like that to you. So that you threw off the sin turned entirely from it and. The day of the Lord for you will be a day of joy. And the greatest joy of it will be the glory of the display of the character of your God that he used to draw you to himself in the first place.

Rend your heart and not your garments return the Holy or God, he is gracious and merciful slow to anger and of great kindness. And he relents from doing harm so it's a turning and not just a from what we turn but a tomb to God it is to be entire intense and sincere it is because of his character it is with a sure hope that he will freely bless.

The who knows of verse 14 is not a who knows of doubt, it's not a question. No one who trusts in him will be put to shame or who call upon his name will be saved say the scripture and here in verse 14, it's sandwiched between the character of this God in verse 13 that we have just been hearing and the response that he gives in with God's help next.

Lord's days passage beginning in verse 18 then Yahweh will be zealous for his land and pity his people and so forth. So there's not a question of if here what's being expressed in this who knows if he will turn and relent is that God is free that your repentance is not manipulating a God who would rather not it's not forcing him to you don't compel him to forgive you by your repentance you're laying you're not overcoming his unwillingness you're laying hold of his willingness.

He is pleased to say. The God who did not spare his own son, but gave him up will also together with him says Romans 8:32 freely graciously, give us all things. Because he freely graciously gave us the son and as we in God's marvelous provenance in the class, just this morning saw if you repent he's the one who freely graciously gave you the repentance.

And so there's no doubt in verse 14, there's liberty and freedom another part of the character of our God is being glorified there. Who knows if he will turn and relent. And he's not only free to forgive in that everlasting way. But even. Even in the way that congregations and churches and nations are sometimes judged.

Because this is not only everlasting blessing but this is blessing for their immediate problem. Remember where we are in the book of Joel Yahweh has invaded Jerusalem. At the head of an army of hundreds of millions and he standing as an invader. And he says who knows if he will turn and relent and leave a blessing behind him?

So the picture is of this locust flag that comes in you remember from last week Garden of Eden in front of them scorched earth behind them. And God says turn now turn with all that you are turn would not just outward but inward to tearing turn because of who I am and my grace and my love and my favor my mercy my patience, first 13.

And when you turn to me, I will turn from you in the picture in Joel here is of the Lord leaving and departing Jerusalem and now it's the opposite. It's the scorched earth in front of him but as he departs he leaves the blessing behind him. And the blessing is public worship.

Because now that he's granted the repentance. It's not the drunkards looking for the new wine and the farmers wanting to make sure that they come out ahead this year and the priests who were embarrassed by the fact that they could no longer do their vocational call in the church.

But all of those and all of Israel have been brought to this repentance in which God himself and the opportunity to adore him is the greatest privilege and the greatest purpose and the greatest priority and so he says who knows if he'll turn and he'll leave behind him that very public worship that he made us to miss by this locust plague.

And so with a sure hope. That he will freely bless.

True repentance emphasizes on to whom to God entire and sincere because of the character of a God apprehending the mercies of God in Christ when assure of that he will freely brought bless than in the fifth place as a member of the holy congregation of his people.

This grain offering and the drink offering and so he says and he picks it up. From the first verse you remember the last time we heard these words at the beginning of verse 15 blow the trumpet and Zion. It was not a good alarm. At the beginning of the chapter blow the trumpet and Zion because of the invasion but now it's a call to worship and it's a call to offer the repentance that has just been commanded in verse 12 in verses 12 through 14 and as a call to do it together the same assembly that was described in chapter 1 is described here the the elders of of the land the priests the consecrated sacred fast.

And. Verse 14 chapter 1 call sacred assembly gather the elders and the evidence of the land. Now, he gives us even more specifically gather the children and the nursing babes that they may learn to weep before the God who has just promised that he will comfort and that he will restore the worship.

The bridegroom and the bride are called out. This is good news for the bride from chapter 1 whose bridegroom had died. The couple that is being described in verse 16, they're getting ready for their wedding and then a call to repent and the holi assembly comes and they say, oh cancel our plans.

Cancel our plans. We've been called to worship. We can get married later. We'll worship now. There's more important than getting married.

How many? Young couples get married on this Saturday. And the first full day of their marriage. They inaugurate by desecrating the Lord's Day and skipping the holy assembly. And they tell themselves well. It's just the once. After all we just got married. After all, it's the honeymoon. After all after all after all.

God says, no. The public worship of God the holy assembly of his people has a higher priority. Then going on your honeymoon, you get married on Saturday leave on Monday. Or plan to get where you're getting in time to attend worship that you have prepared for and planned for as the first act of your honeymoon that you will rejoice in the Lord himself in his assembly on his day together as the first rejoicing.

Bridegroom and bright here. We're talking about weddings in verse 16. That there's.

Moving our culture our church culture. We must worship for baseball games. Fishing trips. I can worship God, just as well hiking. Now, you can't. He has a holy assembly. That has been purchased by and sanctified by consecrated by blood the blood of Jesus.

You can't do as well. On the boat. As with the assembly of the believers. Those who repent repent to be part of his church. Repent of value has public worship.

Though each must repent from the core of who he is, we saw that earlier in the passage and with all that he is if you haven't become part of his holy assembly and if your weekly repenting isn't led by Jesus his priest from heaven. Then your repentance is incomplete.

It is less than what the Bible describes. And that's the last part led by his priests verse 17, but the priests who ministered to Yahweh week between the porch and the altar. So there's. The people and there's the display of the presence of the Lord and the temple and he sends a priest in between.

To over the sacrifice he gives his people priests who lead and who mediate because he gives his son ultimately as the great high priest to leads and who mediates who atones for us and prays for us as our representative before him. Even gives words his own words. Let them say spare your people.

Oh Yahweh. And do not give your heritage to reproach that the nations should rule over them. Who I should they say among the people's where is their God? The Lord Jesus has given us an entire Bible of His words. To be used in our praying in our worshiping in our reading and our singing our preaching our hearing preaching.

The Lord has given. His priest. He has given His Son. Even the words of the Old Testament. First Peter 1:11 says, it was the spirit of Christ carrying them along as they wondered. Who and what and when. As they wrote. Repentance is for God Himself, but it is also from God Himself.

He even gives us the words by which to do it. The Lord makes us grieve our having turned from Him. So that seeing His gracious character, we will turn from Him in the way that He says to do so. Turn from our sin and to Him in the way that He says to do so.

First of all, Focusing especially on to whom we turn. Second of all. That it would be entire and intense and sincere third of all that it would be especially a response to his glorious and gracious character. Fourth with a shore hope. That he will freely bless fifth that the great blessing that he leaves behind as him himself in his public worship and sixth coming through his priest with his words coming through Jesus.

With scripture words. Oh turn to the Lord dear congregation for his great graciousness as glorified as he receives you and blesses you together with all his holy assembly whom he has set apart for his glory. Amen, let us pray.