

Week 17

Joel 2 Lifestyle

*The Call to Lament  
and Wail*

Joel 1:13

*Gird yourselves and lament, you priests; wail, you who minister before the altar; Come, lie all night in sackcloth,*



Disaster had just hit Israel in the form of four successive waves of locust invasion! The fields were laid waste, the oil failed, the land mourned. Society was in shambles. Even the grain offering and the drink offering were being withheld from the House of God. There was cause for much alarm.

In the midst of this, Joel exhorted the people of God to lament and wail or weep before the Lord. What does lamenting and wailing mean? It is not the outward form that matters to God. It is the inward heart. Joel was calling them *to engage the LORD in prayer and have a deep heart-connect with Him.*



Often when crisis hits, man will be tempted to look towards human strategies for answers. But Joel gave us a critical insight which we cannot ignore. It was God who allowed these things to happen, because He was judging the nation of Israel. He wanted to get their attention so that they could turn from their wicked ways. If God is behind all of this, then our only hope is to turn to God and to find out what He wants.

Joel's answer is for God's people to lament and wail, to seek the heart of God and know the truth of what God has spoken. Joel wants us to feel the real pain involved in receiving revelation of the coming crisis and in watching God's judgments unfold.

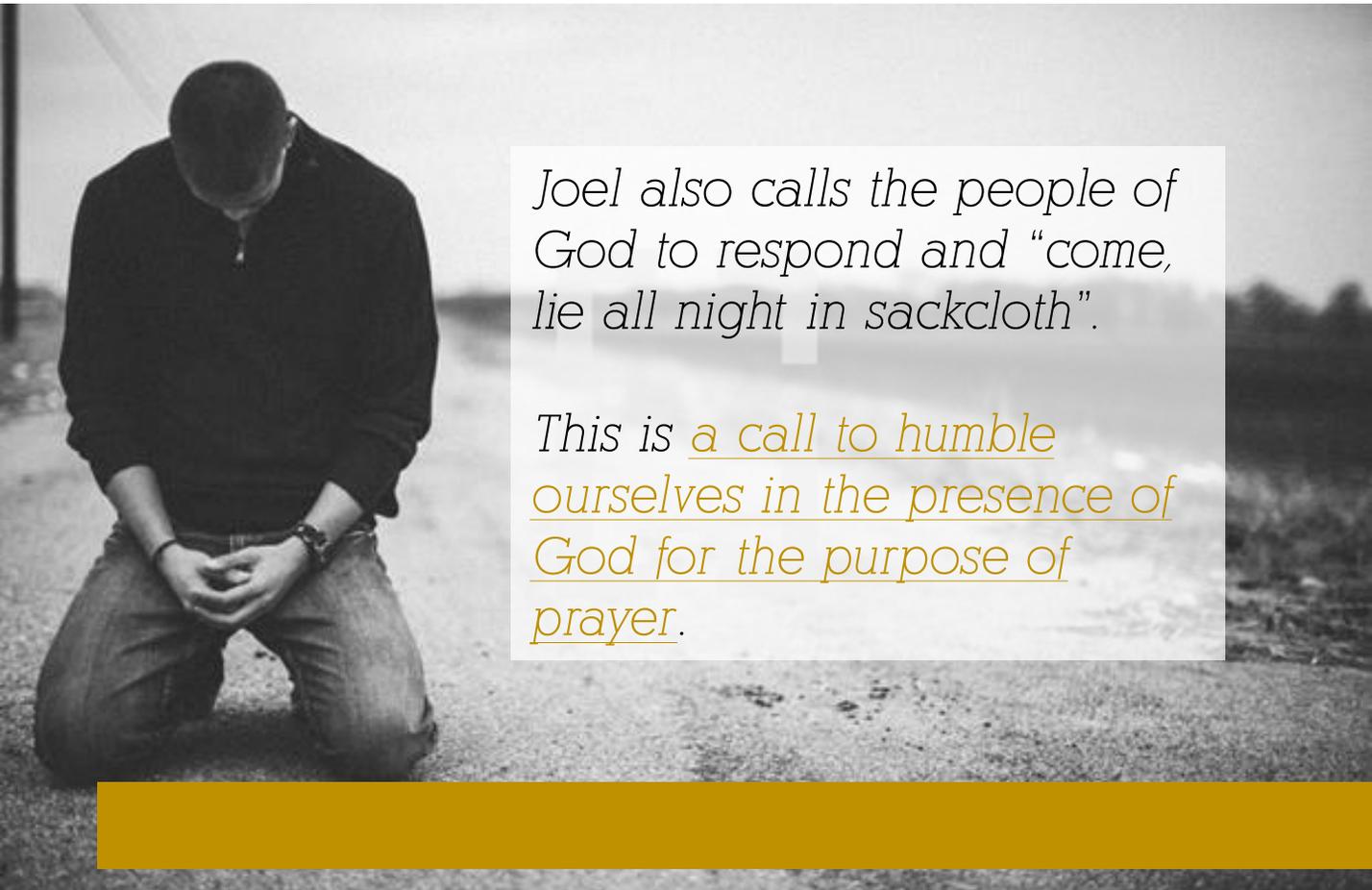


# THE BEATITUDES

Lamenting speaks of the pain and desperation that come from God. It speaks of a desperate cry to possess all that God has ordained for us. We must have more!

In the Beatitudes Jesus taught, “Blessed are those who mourn”. This mourning includes the desperation to enter into the things of God in a greater measure, as well as understanding the sobriety of the hour. We need to be concerned with the things that concern God. Are we pained over our weakness, compromise and powerlessness? Are we also pained about the evil that is escalating in the world? Are we pained about our current condition; both the individual and the corporate state of affairs?

This pain and desperation must drive us to cry out to God. Our cries to have more of God must ascend to Him as wailing. We cry out for a greater breakthrough because we are not okay with “business as usual”. This dimension of lamenting is necessary before the breakthrough comes.



*Joel also calls the people of God to respond and “come, lie all night in sackcloth”.*

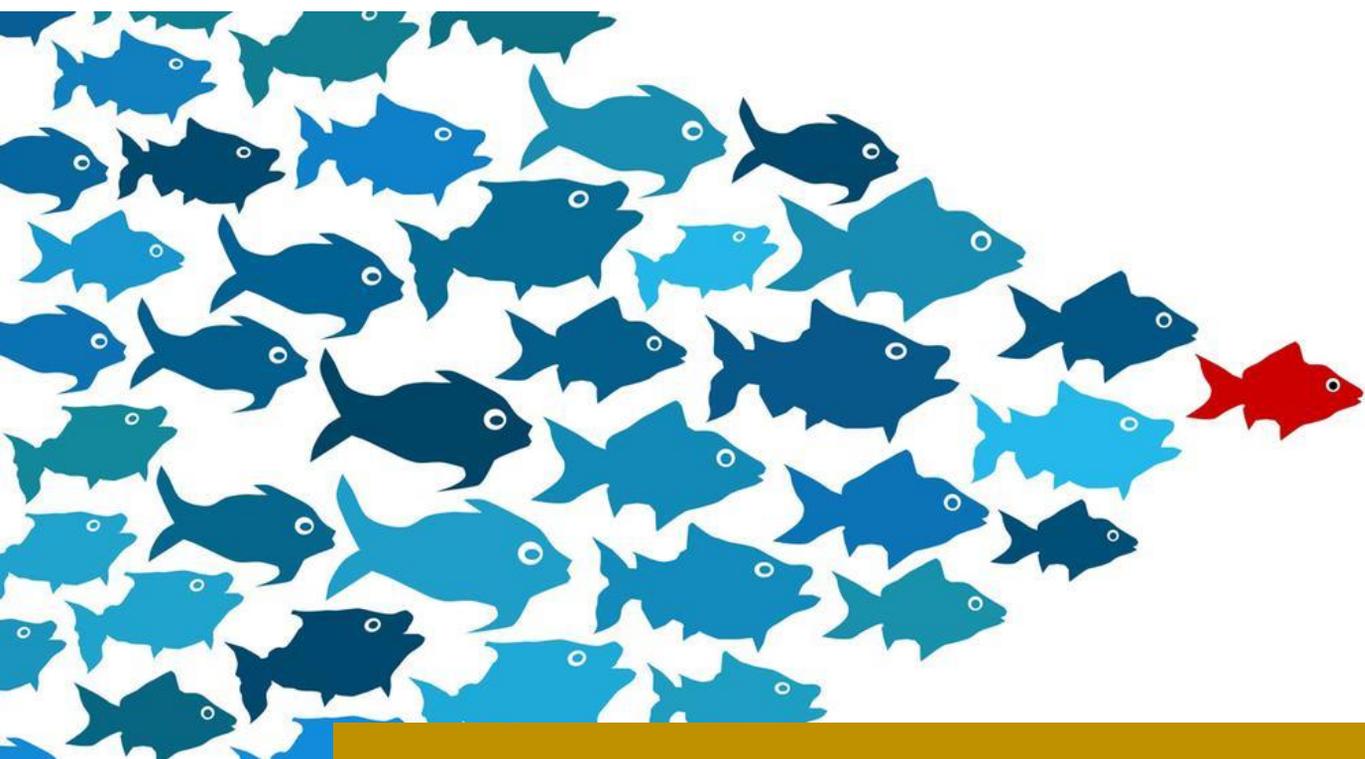
*This is a call to humble ourselves in the presence of God for the purpose of prayer.*

Joel tells the spiritual leadership to lie down in sackcloth. Sackcloth was made of goat’s hair, and thus, it was uncomfortable to wear.

The point of sackcloth was not primarily about discomfort but about humility. The priest’s typical attire was a beautiful priestly garment that was ordained and prescribed by God in Exodus 28.

They were garments of status, honor and prestige. When God gave this call to dress in sackcloth, the main point was not about discomfort, but about the laying down of their positions of privilege.

*In crying out to God in times of crisis, everyone is on equal standing before the throne of God. Joel is essentially calling the leadership to lay down their titles and privileges.*



*There is no unique status accorded to what they have acquired or attained as leaders. It is a call for everyone to come together before the Lord in humility.*



*The call to come and lie all night before the Lord is a divine mandate for all including the leaders. It is a mandate from heaven related to the coming crisis. This is urgent! This is not an option!*

*May we hear the call of the Lord in this hour. Extreme times require extreme measures!*



# Readings and Prayers for the week

## **Readings for Week 17**

Read Scriptures concerning Biblical prophecies that will take place in the End Times. Take time to gain understanding from Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21.

Ask the Holy Spirit to grip your heart with the reality of the seriousness of the times we are living in. Ask Him to place His burdens upon you that you will lament and wail in light of what is happening in the world right now.

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## **Prayers for Week 17**

Use Col 1:9-12 to contend for yourself and the Church to be gripped with a desperation in our hearts that will lead to lamenting and wailing for ourselves and for the nation.