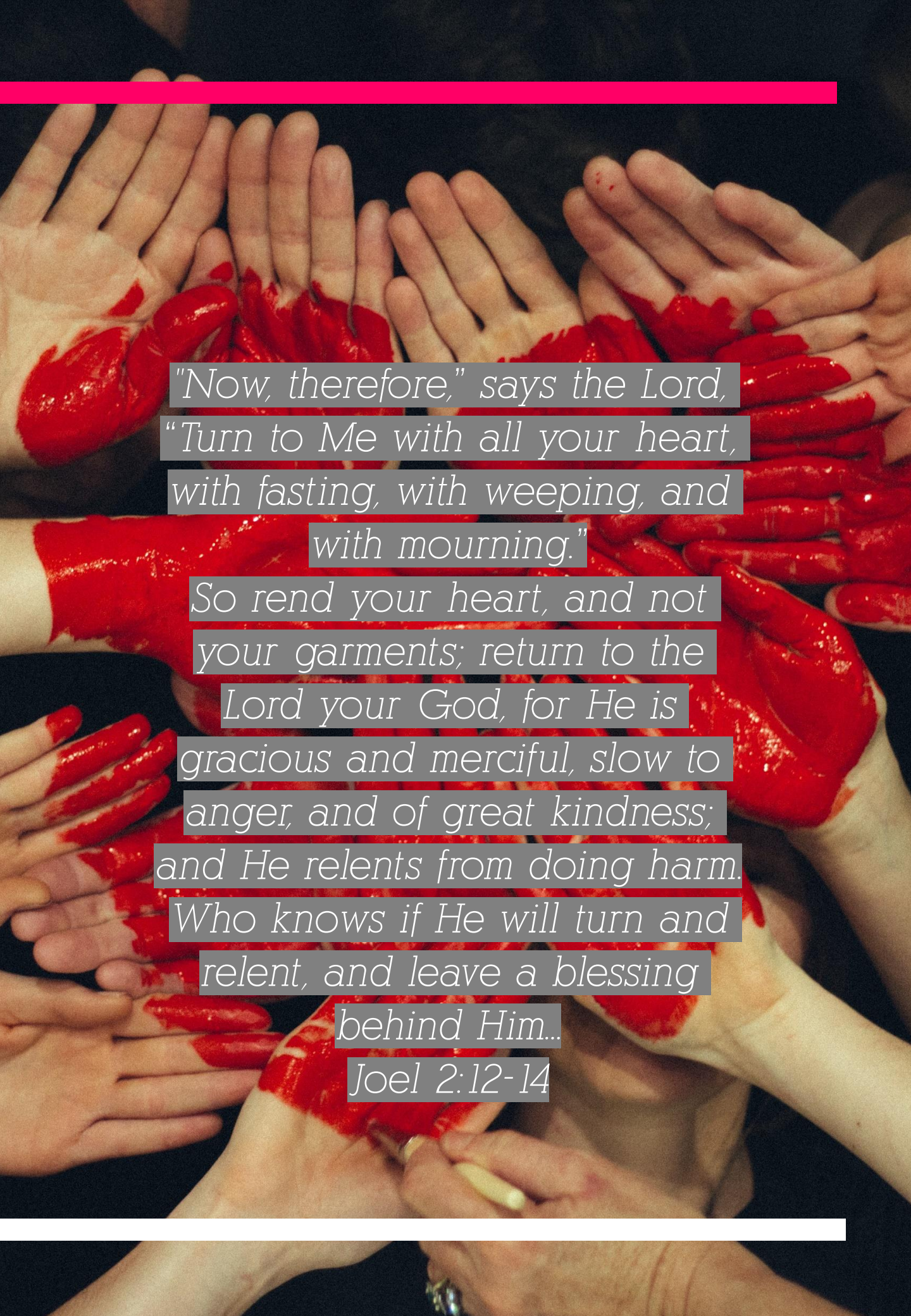




*The Individual
Response God is
Looking For*

A close-up photograph of several hands held together, with red paint smeared on the palms and fingers. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the texture of the skin and the vibrant red of the paint. The hands are arranged in a circular pattern, with some fingers pointing towards the center. The overall mood is one of solemnity and collective action.

*"Now, therefore," says the Lord,
"Turn to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and
with mourning."*

*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.
Who knows if He will turn and
relent, and leave a blessing
behind Him...*

Joel 2:12-14

In Joel 2:11, God through Joel, asked a most sobering question. This is also the most pertinent question for our generation.

“For the Day of the Lord is great and very terrible. Who can endure it?”

The world in our day is facing many escalating crises in the realms of economics, social, politics and morality. Right now, there are wars in the Middle East, massive migrant crisis, instability in North Korea, etc. On top of this, we have frequent natural disasters such as earthquakes, droughts, floods and pestilences.

God is using crises now to warn His people of greater shakings at the End of the Age. The tribulation at the End of the Age will truly be unbearable for those who are not prepared. But for those of us who are prepared, it will be the most glorious time.

The shakings at the End of the Age will be so intense that there is only one viable

solution.

This is the solution that God provides in Joel 2:12-17 - the Joel 2 Lifestyle. Through these few verses, God tells the Church clearly what He is looking for, how to prepare ourselves and even how to divert crisis.

Joel 2:12-17 is what God desires. This is the response that God is looking for. If this is what God requires, we have to seriously cultivate this lifestyle.

This is the clearest passage in the Word that describes what God wants us to do in times of local or national crisis. It is a clear roadmap for the Body of Christ, as this global drama unfolds at the end of the Age.

He wants us to have holy

confidence so that we act with

certainty in times of crisis.

God wants to remove all false

hopes so that we hope only in Him.

God will shake all that can be shaken so as to force the whole world into a corner of desperation, where they cannot find any solution except in Him.

You see, God is a covenantal God. He is looking for relationship. God requires that we turn to Him with wholeheartedness (Joel 2:12). He requires that we respond to His love for us by loving Him back with all our hearts. More than anything else, God wants our heart (Matt. 22:37).



He desires wholehearted love that is *expressed through a lifestyle of fasting and praying*. When we fast and pray, we are cultivating intimacy with God and are actively engaging His heart in love. This is so crucial to know so that we do not just go through the motion.

What does rending our hearts mean (Joel 2:13a)? *It is the dealing with and the alignment of our hearts and our lives with God's ways. It is living in agreement with His heart and His commandments*. In other words, it is obedience to God. Many people think that obedience to God's commandments is legalism. This is not true.

Obedience to God is love when it is done in the context of a relationship. Legalism is observing laws and commandments without a relationship.

In verse 13b, Joel calls us to return to the Lord.

Joel is exhorting us to cultivate confidence in the five-fold nature of who God is; He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, good and of great kindness.

In Jeremiah 9:24, God reveals that He is looking for someone who understands Him, who knows Him intimately, who will boast of who He is no matter what happens.

We need to cultivate and be established in such unshakeable confidence in who God is so that our faith will prevail even in the coming storms.



In the last part of verse 13 and in verse 14, Joel talks about the God who relents from doing harm.

Using the term “Who knows..”, Joel exhorts us to seek the “Perhaps of God”.

This is the mystery of God. He is willing to change His mind because of His merciful and kind heart. Knowing the heart of God and having confidence in Him will empower us to stand in the gap, and intercede for our city and for nations.

Joel 2:12-14 defines the very kind of people God is looking for in such a time as this - wholehearted, living in full agreement with Him, intimately knowing Him and having full confidence in His five-fold nature, and seriously engaging His heart in fasting and prayer.

May we arise to be such a people!



Readings and Prayers for the week

Readings for Week 36

- Read Exodus 33:12 to 34:9 and Psalm 145, focusing and meditating on the five-fold nature of who God is. David had such confidence in who God is (Psalm 27:1-3) because He had a lifestyle of meditating and going deep on who God is.

Prayers for Week 36

- Using Col.1:9-10, pray that the Church will have wisdom to cultivate the lifestyle of wholeheartedness for God, intimacy in knowing His five-fold nature and engaging His heart in fasting and prayer.