

Guided by the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Joel 2: 28-32
Date: April 25, 2021

WATCH

SEEK

There are many ways our senses – especially our eyes – can be fooled. We can see a picture where in one glance we see a duck and in another a rabbit. We can see in another picture a vase or two faces staring at each other. But at other times we're not deceived by a picture – we just can't find what it is we're looking for such as the Where's Waldo craze.

Many in life are in the same conundrum. They are looking for meaning and purpose in their lives but either they get fooled by the picture or they have trouble locating it in the first place. Bible texts such as Proverbs 29: 18 where not having a vision then the people will perish or Jeremiah 29: 13 where God promises a great and glorious future are ones that we can cling to help us through our lives.

Joel 2 speaks of a time when Israel had returned to its homeland following the time in Babylon in exile. They had been re-affirmed as God's people – blessed with a return to Israel and Jerusalem – yet things weren't all that great upon their return either. Joel speaks of how locusts have ravaged the land and a drought has ensued. In addition, enemy nations are gathering at the borders ready to invade.

They are looking for God's presence in the midst of their world and they are looking for God's power to guide them forward - but all they see is ruined fields and a threatened exile – again. They are supposed to be God's people but how are they supposed to be a light when all around seems darkness.

Not only is it hard to see a vision but it's also hard to focus on a vision. Some of our struggle – might be – HOW we are looking though. Some people need glasses to create clarity for reading / seeing at specific distances. Others like looking through the lenses of virtual reality glasses where there own world of reality exists. Even others can use 3D Glasses to help give depth to 2 dimensional issues.

But the reality is – we can't create our own world, we can't cheat to see better and we can't gain an extra dimension. At least on our own!

SEE

Joel tells us though – that God does speak / reveal Himself. He speaks through His Spirit to the people. The Hebrew word Ruach is used in verses 28 and 29. It reminds us that God's spirit is breath to life – life with meaning and life with power.

It's also clear that it is God that is doing it. The giving of the Spirit comes not by the merit or favour or work of people or creation but by God's grace.

Joel is told that God's spirit will be POURED out. Put that image in your mind. The Spirit will not be a trickle or a slow drip but a gushing of God's lavish extravagant grace.

Joel is told that this this revelation – this pouring out of the Spirit - is not limited to a select few people but rather it is available to all. Vs. 28 speaks of children and old persons and vs. 29 speaks of both men and women. All who are servants of the Living God can receive God's Spirit.

There aren't any distinctions for God and examples throughout scripture of God's choices include: a virgin and prostitutes, fishermen and tax collectors, murderers and kings. Even a donkey is used to communicate God's truth!

A truth that vs. 28 speaks of as prophecies, dreams and visions. Each of these are similar in that they are – at their core – designed to reveal God's nature, God's work in creation and God's calling to those who are His servants. In Joel the phrase – *the day of the Lord* - can be used to summarize these visions and revelations. The day of the Lord is a time of God's appearing – both in judgement and in blessing.

WALK

WALK TO GOD - REPENTENCE

The calling / vision from God begins with a cry to return to the Lord. Joel 2: 12-13 speak of a returning to God with a submissive heart and attitude. It is a call of a return of focus – a return of faith. In the midst of the discouragement for the land and in the midst of the fear of the enemies - God is calling Israel to return – to regain their focus – their eyesight upon Him and to regain their faith – their trust in Him.

Many try to live life their own – but they often find how unsuccessful that is. They try and seek a vision or a clarity in their lives but find the glasses are not helpful. But in returning to God - they will see clearly who He is and who they are to Him and in Him.

Proverbs 29: 18 speaks – in the King James Bible – that *where there is no vision then people will perish*. However, more contemporary translations read that where there is no vision (or revelation) **of God** – that people will go their own ways and in doing so will perish. Jeremiah 29: 12-13 speak of a vision that drives people back to the Lord where they will call upon the Lord in prayer and seek Him with all their heart. The vision / revelation is of God and calls us into an action back to God.

WITH GOD – OBEDIENCE

Returning to God leads to a life that is lived with God. God's spirit walks with us and for us showing us that we are designed to walk with God. God desires – through His Spirit – that we would walk with Him as revealed in Psalm 32: 8 of the New Living Translation - ⁸*The LORD says, "I will make you wise and show you where to go. I will guide you and watch over you.* Psalm 119: 105 declares that *God's work is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.*

God guides us that we may walk in communion with Him. That we may hear His voice ongoingly, that we may live with His presence and that we may love others with His power. God guides us with a vision that is renewed / reconciled / restored to who God is, to who we are to God and how we are to live with / for God.

FOR GOD - DELIVERANCE

Joel 2: 32 speaks of a life with God but also for God. That all who hear of God and believe WILL be saved. That there will be a deliverance from the enemies and from the natural disasters as well. That there will be a deliverance from the injustice in our world, from the inequality in our world, from the confusion in our world from the blurriness in our eyes.

God desires to guide us through the perils of this world and God desires to guide us to others who need to know the hope in Him, the love from Him and the truth of Him.

These words in Joel will be a part of a sermon by the disciple / apostle Peter. On the feast of Pentecost the believers were gathered and the Spirit of God was poured out on the believers. People began to speak – praising God for their salvation – in many different languages. They were given a renewed vision of God engaging them, of God forgiving them and of God empowering them.

The were given a vision – a revelation – that is centred on Jesus Christ - God made flesh. The God who walked amongst us revealing how to live kingdom truths obediently, faithfully and lovingly. The God who died for us so that we would be forgiven, reconciled and redeemed. The God who rose again and continues to engage and empower us to live in Him, with Him and for Him. And thousands were saved that day as the Day of the Lord began with the birth of the church.

CONCLUSION

We seek a vision of who we are and how we are to live. God continues to give a vision – to all His servants of who He is and what living with Him is all about.