



Dig Deeper Study Guide

Stroudsburg United Methodist Church - February 19, 2012

Sermon

“Getting Ready for Lent”

Joel 2:1-15

by Bob Shank

Things I want to remember
about this sermon...

Monday 2/20/12

Joel 2:1

Sound the alarm! Blow the trumpet! What do these images conjure up in your mind? Why do people sound an alarm or blow an ear-piercing trumpet blast? And what is the reaction of the people who hear such sounds? Joel tells us that the “inhabitants of the land shake with fear” when they hear these sounds. The reason? Because the day of the Lord is near. Are you ready? Are you prepared for the day of the Lord? Be ready! Listen! Act!

Tuesday 2/21/12

Joel 2:2

Joel says the day of the Lord will be “a day of dreadful darkness.” Have you ever experienced complete and total darkness? I remember being in Mammoth Cave one time in Kentucky. Our guide told us to turn out our headlamps, and then he turned his out, too. The darkness in that cave seemed to overtake us. It was eerie! “Dreadful darkness” is the way Joel puts it. Why do you think the day of the Lord will be a day of “dreadful darkness?”

Wednesday 2/22/12

Joel 2:12 & 15

The Lord says, “return to me with all your heart - with fasting, weeping, and mourning.” The classic definition of “sin” is “anything that separates us from God. Repentance is turning back to God and away from that sin in our life. God calls us to fast, to go without food as a holy discipline, and learn to depend more on God in our life. This discipline is often enacted during the season of Lent. Have you ever fasted? Some don’t fast completely, but choose to give up some food for the whole season of Lent. This discipline helps us rely more on God and less on the stuff around us here on earth. Think about fasting in some way this Lenten Season and see if it brings you closer to God.



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<p>Things to do this week in response to the sermon...</p> <p><i>Are you ready for the day of the Lord?</i></p> <p><i>Am I willing to consider fasting as a discipline for me to practice in some way during this upcoming Lenten season?</i></p>	<p>Thursday 2/23/12 Joel 2:13</p> <p>When we repent and turn to the Lord, we will find that God is “merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and boundless in loyal love - often relenting from calamitous punishment.” Some people do not turn to the Lord because they are afraid of how God might act toward them. God does punish sin and this causes fear. But God is merciful and forgiving. God is slow to anger and God does forgive us from our sin. We have to believe this. By coming to the Lord we experience love and acceptance just as a loving parent who disciplines their child but loves him or her unconditionally. Come to the Lord. Repent of your sin. And experience the love God has for you!</p>
<p><i>Am I ready for the coming of the Lord?</i></p> <p><i>What can I do this Lenten Season to help me be ready?</i></p>	<p>Friday 2/24/12 Matthew 25:2</p> <p>The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is a wake up call to the listener of this important parable of Jesus. The wise ones took extra oil for their lamps. They were ready. The foolish ones were not prepared and then missed the banquet altogether because they had to go out and buy more oil. Don't be like the foolish ones; be prepared and ready! The season of Lent encourages us to be ready for the coming of the Lord. Through disciplines like prayer, repentance, Bible reading, and fasting, we get our souls and bodies ready for the coming the Lord. Don't wait. Start now and be ready!</p>
	<p>Saturday 2/25/12 2 Timothy 3:16</p> <p>The Bible is inspired by God. The words of scripture are useful to us for a number of reasons, not the least of which is for correction and training in righteousness. The Bible teaches us to live a holy and God-centered life. This week read the Bible to discover the life-lessons they provide. And keep reading the Bible every day during Lent. Allow the words of Scripture to correct you, challenge you, and bless you every single day!</p>



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