

“Don’t be afraid, O land. Be glad now and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things. Don’t be afraid, you animals of the field, for the wilderness pastures will soon be green. The trees will again be filled with fruit; fig trees and grapevines will be loaded down once more.” Joel 2:21-22 NLT

lectio // Joel 2:18-29

Joel, the fiery prophet writes, “The Lord will pity his people and jealously guard the honor of his land.” Judgement is hard. Accountability and owning up to mistakes and decisions is humiliating. However, even at its worst, it is temporary, it is a season. Israel went through a few very long seasons of judgment. Here God speaks through Joel, right to the animals and the planet itself, “don’t be afraid” he says, and he talks about restoration. Restoration is often slow and painful in its own way. Memories of the past, how good things were, how happy everyone was and most of all there was hope that it would only get better. But in judgement, and to answer for our wrongs, it becomes a deep sorrow and a longing to go back to better times. When you look around and you see the waste and damage of of disobedience, it almost buries you. And, I would guess that this is where people get stuck. We try to get back, when we should just pick up and start over. We try to regain status, station and reputation when it is clearly gone. It’s time to yield to God’s correction, quit blaming others or bad circumstances and face the truth. Let God restore you and walk with you into a new future, re-written just for you. Look at the burned out fields, can you see lush green pastures coming, can you smell hope? Look at the fruit trees all sad and stubby, can you see figs and grapes on the new vines, can you taste juicy hope? It’s all ahead of us, not behind. It’s all forward, not behind. Pick up and live in God’s restoration and let him recreate you in a new future.

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pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

I hear your voice calling me. Not only to restoration, but to a new, lush green, fruit-filled future. My job is to repent, submit and let you do your full work in me. So I lean into your grace and trust that you not only hold me, but you also hold my future.

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root