

Hello. /We will begin our 11th lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Our message today is from the book of Joel. /The meaning of “Joel” is “Jehovah is God. /Joel served as prophet before Isaiah and Hosea did.

/The book of Joel was recorded during the time of King Joash of South Judah. /Joash became king at the age of seven. /The king was supported by the priest Jehoiada, and he lived a holy life. /Afterwards, the king became corrupt and was punished by God.

/There was a large disaster during the time of King Joash. /There was a plague of locusts. /The prophet Joel understood why the plague was upon them. /Therefore, he urged the people to return to the presence of God and repent.

/This is the content of the book of Joel. /There are two core words concerning the book of Joel. /The first word is “locusts.” /The second is “the Holy Spirit.” /We will later look at these two words.

/The title of the first chapter is “A Prediction of Disaster.” /Verses 1-4 say: Tell your children about the coming disaster and famine.

/Verse 1. /The word of the LORD that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

/The book of Joel does not start with any other text but directly begins with God’s words to Joel. /God rebukes his people who have left God in their sin. /God came back for them with love. /He was showing them a way to escape from their suffering.

/Verse 2. /Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers?

/The draught and the plague of locusts was nothing like they people had seen before. /Their fathers did not experience this disaster. /The people are asked if such a thing had happened in their days.

/If the hardships that are to come are a new kind of hardship, the people must think of the reason in the spiritual sense. /When something happens to us, we must make a spiritual connection and return to God. /This is because God speaks to us through generations, events, and disasters.

/The Tower of Siloam fell and killed 18 people. /The incident is a message from God. /If an unforeseen disaster happens, it means the sin has become heavier.

/Verse 3. /Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation.

/Whether the experiences God gives the people are blessings or punishments, they must be taught to their descendants. /The verse is saying that it should be discipline that is valuable for their faith.

/We believers must also learn from our past faith's successes and failures. /Then, we will become more holy and live blessed lives. /We need to look at both our successes and failures.

/Verse 4. /What the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten.

/The cutting locust, swarming locust, hopping locust, and destroying locust are all types of locusts. /The different terms represent the different stages of adulthood. /A fully grown locust is a cutting locust. /After the cutting locust eats first, its children are born, and they start eating next.

/The children grow into larvae, which are the swarming locusts. /Next, in the final stage, the hopping locust eats away at whatever remains. /In other words, the plague of locusts was so severe that the locusts ate everything.

/When locusts fly, they cover the sun, and it becomes dark. /When the swarms appear, the trees in the region are stripped of their bark and become white within two months. /Then, the green plains become dry and desolate.

/This means that God's plagues become more severe when the people do not repent. /Therefore, we must quickly repent of our sin and humbly return to God.

/One repentant soul is worth more than the whole world. /Verses 5-8 say, "A day will come when the drunk will weep."

/Verse 5. /Awake, you drunkards, and weep, and wail, all you drinkers of wine, because of the sweet wine, for it is cut off from your mouth.

/The verse tells those who have left God for the world to weep in repentance. /We must not be carried away by the things God has given to us. /We need to make God and only God happy. /We need to find pleasure in God and seek hope and happiness.

/This blessing is spiritual blessing. /God told Israel to weep and cry. /The reason is when they return to God and God forgives them, he gives the people a great blessing. /Repentance is a very valuable action. /When we repent, sins are forgiven. /Also, we receive big rewards.

/Verse 6. /For a nation has come up against my land, powerful and beyond number; its teeth are lions' teeth, and it has the fangs of a lioness.

/The frightening swarm of locusts is compared to a strong and numerous army. /If Israel does not repent, God says he will punish them by sending a frightening, powerful army.

/Verse 7. /It has laid waste my vine and splintered my fig tree; it has stripped off their bark and thrown it down; their branches are made white.

/God says the vine and the fig tree are “mine.” /Everything we possess belongs to God. /Everything we have accomplished /and everything we have gathered with our hard work all belong to God. /Nothing we own is ours.

/We are simply managers. /It follows that we must use our possessions according to the will of the owner of our possessions. /If God decides to destroy a vine by stripping off the bark and throwing it down, he can do so. /Normally, a swarm of locusts cannot do this. / However, when God gives his command, these things do happen.

/Verse 8. /Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth.

/We must admit that the plague happened because we left God. /Mourning and repenting of our sin is a very valuable thing. /God accepts those who repent, and he blesses them. / However, these changes of heart do not often happen in our surroundings.

/Verses 9-12 are about offerings being cut off from the house of the LORD and production ending in the fields. /If we take a look at Exodus 29, we can see that offerings were given twice a day in the house of God, once in the morning and once in the evening. /Grain offerings and drink offerings were offered to God. /These offerings are offerings of devotion.

/The rules of the offerings were established so that the people would offer their bodies and hearts daily to God. /These offerings are called continual offerings. /But when God’s plagues came upon them, they could not produce flour nor grape wine. /They were put into a sad situation where the priest could not obey God’s command.

/Verse 10. /The fields are destroyed, the ground mourns, because the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil languishes.

/The field dried up due to the extreme drought. /There was no wheat or barley. /There were no grapes or olives. /They had nothing to harvest and nothing to eat, so there was nothing they could give to God.

/Why did it become like this? /The reason is they abandoned God. /They had forgotten about God’s grace. /The people tried to live pleasurable lives among themselves without God. /It is far better when we can pray, serve, and worship before God.

/Verse 11. /Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil; wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished.

/God calls on the drunk, the farmers, and everyone else to repent and return to him. /When farmers have something to reap and can eat the fruits of their labor, they are

greatly blessed. /On the other hand, when they have nothing to harvest, it is a big problem. /This is God's punishment.

/Verse 12. /The vine dries up; the fig tree languishes. Pomegranate, palm, and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up, and gladness dries up from the children of man.

/Now, God has struck them with drought. /All the pleasures that they enjoyed disappeared. /We need to realize this one thing. /The way to living a happy life is to find joy in God in our lives.

/A person who puts his joy in God is not affected by the availability or unavailability of material goods. /He finds joy in whatever environment he is in. /The prophet Habakkuk said this. / "Though the fig tree should not blossom... and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD! /This is true faith.

/Now, we will look at 1:13-20. /I will briefly introduce the content. /The Israelites did not live their lives of faith according to God's word. /They were living the wrong way.

/In order to bring them to realization, God sent the disaster of locusts. /When they did not come back to God, he sent a disaster of drought. /He made it so that no man, cow, or sheep could eat anything.

/Verse 13. /Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.

/When everything goes wrong before God, the first to come to realization must be the ministers. /The reason is the ministers are people who hold onto the word and lead the people with the word.

/The ministers should have led their people with good faith. /But because they did not properly guide the people, the people's faith became corrupt. /Their lives also became corrupt.

/Therefore, the ministers are told to put on sackcloth as if someone had died and repent. / They could no longer give grain offerings or drink offerings to God. /Due to the famine, they became poor. /Because of this, they could not give grain and drink offerings.

/When we do not want to live in the presence of God, when we do not want to give to God, there will come a time when we cannot give to God. /The ministers must first obey and realize their sin. /Next, the believers must repent.

/Verse 14. /Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the LORD your God, and cry out to the LORD.

/The verse tells the ministers to first repent and consecrate a fast. /Also, the ministers must bring the people to repent of the sins of their entire lives. /When we face difficulties, we need to repent and cry out to God.

/When we earnestly cry out to the Lord, God saves us from hardship. / “and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” /Psalm 50:15. /When we return to God and repent, God will glorify us.

/Verse 15. /Alas for the day! For the day of the LORD is near, and as destruction from the Almighty it comes.

/ “The day of the LORD” refers to the end of days. /The events that happen on this world are God’s warnings of judgment in the last days. /The disasters that happen are samples of God’s judgment in the last days.

/Verse 16. /Is not the food cut off before our eyes, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

/Because the people did not come to realization after the locusts, a bigger disaster struck them. /If they had repented after the locusts came, they would have been restored. /However, since they did not, they lost the joy and pleasure of worshiping in the presence of God.

/We need to value the fact that we can come before God, worship him, and give him offerings. /We also must see how precious it is for us to be able to sing praises and serve God. /We need to be thankful for our health and time today. /We need to be thankful for our environment and the material possessions that God has given us.

/Verse 17. /The seed shrivels under the clods; the storehouses are desolate; the granaries are torn down because the grain has dried up.

/If the people had repented after the disaster of locusts, they would not have come to this condition. /But since they did not repent, they encountered a greater disaster.

/They had storehouses, but no grain to fill them up. /The granaries were broken down, but with no grain, there was no need to repair them. /This means that their failure became worse.

/Verse 18. /How the beasts groan! The herds of cattle are perplexed because there is no pasture for them; even the flocks of sheep suffer.

/At this time, Israel did not understand the severity of the drought. /The beasts groaned, the herds of cattle were perplexed, and the flocks of sheep suffered. /If the grains do not grow, the livestock must make up for the lack of grain. /However, they were at a place where they could not maintain their livestock.

/Verses 19-20. /To you, O LORD, I call. For fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and flame has burned all the trees of the field. Even the beasts of the field pant for you because the water brooks are dried up, and fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

/Israel was facing difficulties. /There was no way Joel could not cry out to God. /The drought was so severe that the pastures became dry. /Furthermore, fire had burned the grass of the field.

/Due to the severe drought, it was difficult for Israel to be restored. /When placed in these circumstances, the Israelites had to cry out to God. /When they do repent, God shows his mercy.

/When it is the most difficult time of your life, it is the time to return to God. /If we do so, we experience God's almighty power. /We can see God's power appear before us when we are in tough situations.

/I will now tell you the conclusion of Joel chapter 1. /We need to always remember God's messages of warning. /The leaders and those who are responsible must repent before God. /When we are punished, we need to repent and turn back to God.

/When we return to God, we will experience the power of God. /I hope that you and I experience his power. /This is the conclusion for chapter 1.

/Now we will look at Joel chapter 2. /The title of chapter 2 is "Tear your Hearts." /We should not tear our clothes like the Israelites did, but we must tear our hearts. /Verses 1-11 warn about impending hardship.

/God sends one form of punishment and waits for us to repent. /But when we do not repent, he increases the intensity of the punishment. /Israel should have repented when the prophet Joel gave them a warning. /If they had done so, they would have been redeemed from disaster. /They rejected the warnings and fell into greater disaster.

/Verse 1. Please read. /Blow a trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; it is near,

/ "Zion" and "holy mountain" refers to God's church. /The verse wants to let the people know that God's judgment is near. /It is also a warning of judgment to the people of the world.

/ "The day of the LORD" is God's day of judgment. /God's rule and intervention is near. /We need to hear God's message in our lives.

/Verse 2. /a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains a great and powerful people;

their like has never been before, nor will be again after them through the years of all generations.

/The locusts swarmed upon them all at once. /The sun was covered by the locusts, and the day became dark as if it were covered with clouds. /The light had become like the faint light of dawn. /When the Assyrians come, they will come accompanied by many armies.

/The force of the locusts was incredible. /The flying sounds of the locusts were like thunder. /The feces that fell from the locusts were like hail. /It is believed that swarms of locusts can derail a train. /They can also make the sky dark.

/In the novel “The Good Earth” by Pearl Buck, a swarm of locusts appears. /When the locusts appear all at once and sit upon a plain, the entire plain disappears. /Here, the verse says there will be a disaster like there has never been before nor will be again through the years. /There is no one who will avoid God’s judgment.

/Verse 3. /Fire devours before them, and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them a desolate wilderness, and nothing escapes them.

/The disaster of the locusts became so severe that fire devoured before them and behind them a flame burned, turning the land into a desolate wilderness. /In the future, when Assyria invades, the land will become desolate. /The garden of Eden will become like a dry desert.

/Yes, this is true. /When Israel obeyed God, the place was beautiful like the garden of Eden. /But when it casted aside God’s grace, it became a barren wilderness. /A place that abandons God becomes like a desolate desert.

/Verses 4-5. /Their appearance is like the appearance of horses, and like war horses they run. As with the rumbling of chariots, they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire devouring the stubble, like a powerful army drawn up for battle.

/The sounds of locusts running, flying, and moving were like the moving formations of a large army. /Through the small disasters in our life, we can prepare for the larger disasters.

/Verse 6. /Before them peoples are in anguish; all faces grow pale.

/It is impossible to avoid locusts once the disaster strikes. /The verse predicts that Israel will not be able to avoid Assyria’s invasion. /Once God’s punishment starts, no one will be able to handle it. /They can only stare with pale faces. /Human beings cannot manage God’s judgment.

/Verses 7-8. /Like warriors they charge; like soldiers they scale the wall. They march each on his way; they do not swerve from their paths. They do not jostle one another; each marches in his path; they burst through the weapons and are not halted.

/The locusts moved much like a well-trained army. /The Assyrian army that will attack in the future will move the same way. /The reason God gives these warnings is not to frighten the people.

/What is the reason for God telling them this? /It is for them to avoid God's wrath by repenting and standing properly before God. /God is teaching them how to dodge disaster. /God warns us to avoid calamity because he loves us.

/Verse 9. /They leap upon the city, they run upon the walls, they climb up into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief.

/Locusts leap around everywhere and crawl into open spaces. /They eat away at everything in a house. /The same thing will happen when the Assyrians invade Israel. /They will plunder the city and houses and take away their belongings.

/Verse 10. /The earth quakes before them; the heavens tremble. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

/When the swarm of locusts flies around, the earth quakes, and the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. /The Assyrian invasion will bring upon darkness, as if the sun ceased to exist. /We need to live before God in faith. /If we do not, everything we have may disappear in the blink of an eye.

/Verse 11. /The LORD utters his voice before his army, for his camp is exceedingly great; he who executes his word is powerful. For the day of the LORD is great and very awesome; who can endure it?

/God gives his command in all these things. /God is the one who makes the noise and the one who gives orders. /Therefore, no one can disobey God. /No one can stop what God plans to do.

/We must not be at a place where we anger God. /We need to be acknowledged before God.

/This ends the eleventh lecture on the Minor Prophets. /Thank you.