

God Who Restores

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Preacher: Steve Tyburski

[0 : 00] Good morning. Good to see you this morning. I haven't been with you guys in a month. I've been working the refueling outage at the nuclear plant to try to keep your lights on.

! You're welcome. How many of you ever restore furniture or anything? Anybody? I really, really appreciate somebody that is good at restoring.

Whether it's a car. I didn't ask how many were good at it. I just asked how many did it. People who restore cars. You go to a car show and see these cars that these guys do and you're like, man, it looks better probably than it did when it was new.

I live in a house that John Gunn built. I know a lot of you guys know John. He was just a master at doing some things. And some things I find in the house I look at and I'm like, John, John, what were you thinking?

Especially electrical. I'm an electrician and I'm looking at some of the stuff he's done and I'm like, my goodness, John, you're lucky it didn't burn down. But anyway, one of the things John showed me when I was looking at his house was his dining room set.

[1 : 23] And he had been out of the house out. And the guys that were living in the house, I think there were some teenagers or something, they broke one of his dining room set chairs.

So they were sitting in it and they were lifting it by the back and everything and they broke one of the chairs and they threw it away. So now he has this dining room set that is one chair shy of a full set.

And John said, I made one of those chairs. I had to replace that chair. So he ended up copying it and making it. Now this thing was intricate. The construction of the chair wasn't that much, but the back of it had all the carvings in it.

And John copied it and with a knife he carved the chair. And I couldn't tell which one it was looking at it. As a matter of fact, I picked one. I said, I think it's this one, John. He said, no, it's this one over here.

And then he showed me why, you know, the different. He couldn't exactly match the wood, but it was close enough to where it fooled me.

[2 : 44] But anyway, I was really impressed with that, his restoration capabilities. He used to, I've got hanging over my sink something that he made. It's a metal, it's like a grapevine.

And he made all of that stuff and it's out of copper. And my neighbor who lives next door to me now, lived next door to John. He said, yeah, John would just keep little scraps of copper and anything. And he would take a little piece of copper wire or something and he'd just start beating on it. And then the next thing you know, he's made a grape leaf out of this copper and all that stuff. I'm like, it's pretty amazing what he could do.

So today, though, we're going to, we're in Joel. And what struck me as I was reading the passage that I've been assigned today was the restoration acts of God.

And that's what we're going to look at. But before we get into it, let's pray. Lord, I thank you for this opportunity to stand before the people that you love, Lord. The people that you died for.

[3 : 55] And the people, Lord, that you care about every day and take care of. Lord, you do so much for us that really goes unnoticed by us.

And you do so much for us that we don't deserve. But you do it because you love us. And I pray, Father, now that as we open your word, that you will speak to us, help us to understand it.

Help us, Lord, to then not only understand, but use it to make our lives better, make ourselves better servants of yours.

And Lord, just better citizens of this great country that you've given us. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. All right. Like I said, today we're in Joel.

It'll be Joel chapter 2. If you want to turn in your Bible to that, that would be good. It was in Sunday school this morning. I've got my great teacher there, Phil, taught the children this morning.

[5 : 02] And one of the things that he talked about was something that I thought about talking about this morning. was the cycle that Israel seemed to be in. They would sin.

And they would be warned about their sin, about, you know, God's judgment is going to come if you don't repent and if you don't change your ways.

God was going to judge. And of course, God would judge. Judgment would come. And then they would be suffering and they would turn.

Then they would turn and repent. And they would be restored to a right relationship to God. And we see this actually several times in Israel's history, this same cycle that we're going.

And in Joel, that's what we've been seeing so far. What I have missed from you guys going over the first chapter and a half of Joel was the judgment that God had sent by sending this insect.

[6 : 13] What was this insect that had come and ravaged the locusts? The locusts had come and just destroyed. There's history about these locusts.

I understand that it's once every few generations, they have locust problems over there. And sometimes they would be so thick it would darken the sky because the locusts were so many of them.

But the locusts came and they just decimated the crops, ate everything that was inside. And then after that, a drought came.

So now it's hard for stuff to grow back. And then if that wasn't enough, God was sending a great army to destroy them. And Joel was warning them about this army that was on the way to destroy them.

And then, you know, the things that they had to do, what Joel said, is to rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repent of the evil.

[7 : 27] And wants them to repent of the evil. And then he says, who knoweth he will return, repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even the meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God.

So what, I'm sorry, I messed all that up. But basically what he's saying, turn to the Lord. Rend your heart and not your garments. You know, a lot of times in Israel and that culture, they would rend their garments when they were showing signs of, you know, great distress or, you know, they're just repentant of, or not repentant, but sorrowful.

And, you know, you know, you can kind of put on a show when you're in your garment. You cannot be.

I think, I forgot what preacher it was. Some great preacher had, this lady had come to him talking about how sinful she was and how she really needed to repent.

And she was so sorry for her sins. And he says, okay, so you've sinned, that means you've broken God's commandments. He was a little bit skeptical of her.

[8 : 45] You know, he's thinking, this lady is not being sincere here. So he says, let's talk, let's see, you must have broken commandments. So let's talk about, see which ones you've broken.

And he asked her, you know, thou shalt have no other gods before you. Is that, have you broken? She said like, well, no, no, I don't think I've, I've broken that one.

I can't, not to my knowledge anyway. So, okay, so don't, don't make any graven images. Have you done that? Nope. I definitely haven't done that one. I haven't made any graven images.

So he goes through all the commandments and she can't pinpoint any particular thing that she's done wrong where she's broken any commandments.

And he knew then for sure this lady was not being sincere with her coming to him. I'm such a sinner. I need to repent. I need to, so rending your garments is not necessarily a sign that you are really sorrowful and repentant, but rending your heart.

[9 : 51] God gets right to the problem. It's your heart the problem. And so that's what they're, you know, he's telling the people to repent and come back to him.

So I'm going to read from verse 18. I'm going to try to read it better than what I read the other stuff. Sorry. Joel 2 verse 18 through 27 is what I have.

And we'll try to get through this. Then, so there's people who, you know, with the repentance, if you actually rend your heart and you actually repent, it says, then will the Lord be jealous for his land

and pity his people.

Yea, the Lord, and this is out of the King James, by the way. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, behold, I will send you corn and wine and oil, and you shall be satisfied therewith.

And I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen. But I will remove far off from you the northern army and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea and his hindrampart toward the utmost sea.

[11 : 03] And his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength.

Be glad, then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain, in the first month.

The floor shall be full of wheat, and the vat shall overflow with wine and oil, and I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, my great army which I sent among you.

And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who hath dealt wondrously with you, and my people shall never be ashamed.

[12 : 06] And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else, and my people shall never be ashamed. So what we're seeing here is, once the repentance comes, then God restores.

God restores to them the rain. It says the latter rain, or the former rain, the latter rain. And that's the springtime rain, and some translations say this, the springtime rain to germinate the seeds, and then the latter rain is the rain that comes later, just before the harvest, to plump things up.

God is going to restore all of these things to them because of their repentance. And as I was thinking about God restoring these things to them, I just thought about Jesus' restoration.

What Jesus does to restore. One of the things Jesus did to restore was he restored health to people. Various things like fevers, blindness, deafness, muteness, lameness, the lady who had the hemorrhaging.

He restored health to all these things. He restored his right minds to people who were demon-possessed by casting out demons.

[13 : 40] He restored people to their communities, such as the lepers. The lepers who had to be away from everyone because of their leprosy.

He restored life to the dead people. There was Jairus' daughter. Lazarus, he rose again. A widow's son, he rose again from the dead.

The biggest restoration that Jesus did was restoring our relationship with God. Romans 5, 1 says, Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because God, in 2 Corinthians 5, 21 says, For he made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God.

So God, Jesus reconciled us to God, allowed us to have peace with God. Romans 5, 10 says, For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.

[14 : 52] And now, because Jesus rose again, it says, Much more being reconciled, we will be saved by his life. Because he rose again, we know 100% sure that we too will rise again.

So those are some of the things that God did. And one of the other things when I was talking about restoration, in verse 25, he says, I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten.

Which is a weird thing to say. You know, you would think, Okay, I'm going to restore to you the crops, or the bounty, or whatever. But he says, Destroy the years that the locusts have eaten.

And I was reading about, What does that mean to restore the years? And one of the things, I used to garden quite a bit.

And At first it was good. But somewhere along the line, the deer found found my gardens. And it never fails.

[16 : 01] You know, I do, I put so much time and effort into planting that garden. And making sure that it's weeded. And making sure that it gets water.

And just taking care of this garden. And then overnight, when you think, Tomorrow, I'm going to be able to pick some tomatoes. Or pick something. And you come out there and find out that

something has been in there.

And just either mowed things all the way to the ground. Or taking a bite out of, one bite out of each thing that you wanted to pick. And left the rest of it. And you think, Oh, that's a waste of time.

That was a waste of time. And I'm thinking these guys in Israel. You know, after seeing the, the locusts just destroy their, you know, their stuff.

And the farmer thinks, All my time is wasted. Wasted. God said, I'm going to restore that time to you. Another thing to think of, you know, I just had a birthday.

[17:02] While I was gone, the 28th of October, I turned 39. Okay. I can't lie. I can't lie. I turned 65.

Cheryl turned 39. Every year. No, we're, 65. That's, to some of you guys, it's not that old.

To some of us, though, it's pretty old. My father passed away at 65. I, I used to work with a guy who said, and I've told some of you this story. He, he was going to retire at 62.

He, he always said, I'm retiring at 62. I'm retiring at 62 because I'm dying when I'm 65. And, uh, he said, you don't know that you're going to die.

He said, oh no, every man in my family has died at 65. He said, I don't know why I would be any different. I'm going to die at 65. Well, he retired at 62. And when he was 65, he died of a massive heart attack.

[18:06] It's pretty amazing. So, when I hear about other people, and I've, I've, uh, met other people, and people that, look, man, this guy's pretty old.

And my wife and I were talking to a guy, uh, one day, and he just seemed like an old man. And he, he, uh, he was talking about his chickens and his dogs.

And he said, well, you know, it's kind of hard for me to take care of. He said, I'm 60 years old now. I'm like, that's pretty amazing, you know? But, so 60, 65 is pretty old.

And I got to thinking about my life. And, you know, you have things that you regret, things that, wish I could come back and, you know, do it differently.

Um, one of the things I regret, Matt, that, that we, we need to do in our Sunday school classes. I, I feel like we really need to have music for our kids.

[19:07] Teach them. We don't even sing. When I was a kid, you know, the last time I talked up or spoke up here, I sang the Lord's army song. That was something that I learned as a kid.

And this time, and my wife's probably been hearing me sing it over and over again. Uh, he's able, he's able, he's able. I know he's able. I know my God is able to carry me through.

He heals the brokenhearted. He, he sets the captive free. He made the lame to walk again. And he calls the blind to see all these things that God has restored. God is restoring to people.

These, these problems. And it's just, we, we teach it. Our kids can learn so much about God and God's character through music.

And I think that we should do that in our classroom. So, Matt, me being, me being the coming up with the idea, I'm turning it over to you to make it happen.

[20:11] Anyway, another thing I, I think of is, uh, some of the things I, that I kind of regret doing is, I would, should be a better uncle to my, uh, my brother's children.

You know, I hardly have any relationship with them. You know, you, you think about your life and how you think, okay, now at this point, you know, the best is behind me.

But you know what? With heaven before us, the best is yet to come for us. The best is yet to come. God is a God that can restore those years.

If you think, if you think, man, I have, I have ruined, I, I've just done things in my past. I've wasted so much time not serving God or wasting my, wasted my life doing this or that, that is useless.

God can restore that to you. God said, I can restore those years. Today's the first day of the rest of your life. You can make a change today so that you don't feel tomorrow like you wasted anything.

[21:27] If you, if you feel like, God, I can't be used, I can't be used by you for whatever reason, God, God, nothing is too hard for God.

No matter what your problems are, God can handle it. And He can restore you. He can restore what you, what you wasted, what the locust has taken away.

I know that's a short sermon, but we're having, Lord's Supper today. But that was my, that was what was impressed with me with this, with this passage, is the restoration of God.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you so much for your restoration capabilities, Lord.

I thank you, Lord, that you have promised that you'll restore the years, restore the time that we wasted. And I, I pray, Father, that each of us will, will take you up on that.

[22 : 36] And Lord, rend our hearts today. And, I'll turn to you, repent from what's, what's keeping us from you, Lord, and allow you to show us your great and mighty mercy and your restoration capabilities.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Amen.