Everyone who Calls on the Name of the LORD is Saved

Joel 2:18-3:21

Key Verse: 2:32 “And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.”

Last Tuesday, Pastor David Yonggi Cho, who founded the largest church in the world in Seoul Korea, passed away. Some historians say that he is the pioneer of the spiritual revival movement in South Korea during the 1960s and 70’s, along with president Park, who started the New Village Movement, and Mr. Chung, the founder of Hyundai Corp. At that time, pastor Cho advised president Park to name this national movement the ‘New Heart Movement.’ But president Park called it the ‘New Village Movement.” Indeed, because of the Korean War, the peninsula of Korea was devastated. At that time, Korea was known as one of the poorest countries in the world. But through these three giants’ prayer and leadership, South Korea is now the 8th largest economical country in the world. What I want to say here is that restoration always follows destruction.

In Joel 1:1-2:17 we studied God’s judgment against Israel who sinned against him. The land of Judah and Israel was devastated by the invasion of locusts. There was nothing left where the swarm of locusts passed by. God urged his people to rend their hearts and return to him. Our God is gracious and compassionate, and he relents what he did. In today’s passage, we learn how God restores the land of Judah and Israel. As Joel described God’s judgment in detail, so does he also for God’s restoration.

First, God who restores (2:18-27) When we read the Bible, we see repetition of the same pattern of God’s judgment and salvation. Adam sinned against God and this world was cursed. God punished Adam. But God provided the way of salvation in the midst of his punishment. (Ge 3:15) In Noah’s day, God judged the world by water. Every living thing on this earth died. Still, God saved Noah’s family and started a new beginning with his descendants. (Ge 9). Abraham made many mistakes in the promised land, still God bore with him until he became a father of many nations. His descendants came out of Egypt by the power of God and entered the Promised Land after 40 years of wilderness training. But in the promised land they forgot God and worshiped idols. Still, God had hope for his people and promised to restore them. These stories seemed to be about God’s one-sided love for his undeserving people. After men mess up, God always fixes it. In the same way, after God judges his people, he restores them. Our God is a God who restores. Jesus came to this world for two reasons: to redeem us and to restore us. He came to redeem us from the slavery of sin through his death and resurrection. He also came to restore us, whose images are disfigured because of our sin. From next week, we will study Mark’s gospel. We will study how Jesus redeemed and restored his people.

How did God promise to restore his people in this book? Look at verses 18-20. “***Then the LORD was jealous for his land and took pity on his people. The LORD replied to them: “I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations. “I will drive the northern horde far from you, pushing it into a parched and barren land; its eastern ranks will drown in the Dead Sea and its western ranks in the Mediterranean Sea. And its stench will go up; its smell will rise.” Surely he has done great things!***” God’s judgment against the sin of Israel was severe. According to 1:10, the fields are ruined and the ground is dried up. The grain is destroyed and the new wine is dried up and the olive oil fails. Verses 18-20 continues that even the wild animals pant for the LORD. The cattle moan because they have no pasture and even the flocks of sheep suffer because of drought. But now the LORD plans to restore them all. He promised to send grain again for his people with new wine and olive oil. God will provide not a little, but enough to satisfy them fully. God will restore their land and food with honor and safety. God will remove their enemies from their land and restore their position as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God will restore them to be a covenant people.

Look at verse 22. “***Don’t be afraid, you wild animals, for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches***.” God’s restoration reaches even to wild animals and nature. The wild animals suffered much when the field was ruined and the ground was dried up. But now the field will be restored and the ground will be filled again. God’s restoration is not local, but global; not partial, but whole.

After the long years of drought, rain comes, and farmers are glad and rejoice. God's people in Zion are the same. Look at verse 23. “***Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.***” What is the result of the abundant rains on the land of Judah? The threshing floors will be filled with grain and the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. (24) God will heal the land and restore the crops. They will have plenty to eat until they become full, and they will praise the name of the LORD. (26)

Look at verse 27. “***Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed***.” Here we learn that the purpose of God’s punishment over his people is discipline. Hebrews 12:6 says, “*because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”* God disciplined Israel because he loved them. He accepted them as his own son and disciplined them to be holy before him. Fathers discipline their children because they love them. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (He 12:11) Through God’s discipline and his restoration, his people finally realize that God is love. God loved his people, so he disciplined them. Through the restoration they realize that God is with them and he is in Israel. They believe that God did not give them up, but still loves them. They again believe that the LORD is God, their true object of worship and devotion.

Second, the day of the LORD (28-32) The day God restores the land of Judah, he will also renew the heart of people in Judah. God will give them new heart and new Spirit. Look at verses 28-29. “***And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.***” In the past, God gave his Spirit on certain chosen people such as Moses and David. But in the last day, God will pour out his Spirit to all people regardless of their age, position, or race. What will happen when they receive God’s Spirit? Our sons and daughters will prophesy. They will say what God is going to do through them. When the Holy Spirit comes, our sons and daughters will sing and praise the Lord like David Lee, and they will share the word of God. I know a young man who used to blame others and curse himself. But these days he praises God and give thanks to him. His cursing lips was changed into praising lips. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit comes, old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions. Old men will stop complaining and talking about new earth and new heaven. Young men will share the visions God shows them. We have a vision for this nation. This is also our prayer topic. It is for America to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation and a shepherd nation for the whole world.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred on Pentecost while Jesus’ disciples gathered together and prayed earnestly. According to Acts 2, while they were praying, the Holy Spirit came down like a tongue of fire, and they began to speak in tongues. People around them were surprised by this and said that the disciples were drunk. At that time, Peter stood up among and said that they were not drunk, but filled with the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came down, they received the power to perform miracles. When the Holy Spirit came down, they saw the vision of God for world salvation. They saw the whole world as a harvest field. They saw God’s vision to evangelize the whole world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1960-70 when the Holy Spirit came on to our brothers and sisters, they saw world mission vision. God scattered them to every corner of the world to preach the good news of Jesus Christ.

God restores not only our living environment but also our hearts for his purpose, just as the New Heart Movement followed the New Village Movement. God said in Ezekiel 36:25-27. “*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws*.” We expect a better living situation. We want to see our bank accounts filled with money, we want to drive a Tesla and to live in a gorgeous house as many others do in Clayton. But our first priority is to renew our hearts daily and to receive the Holy Spirit. If our hearts are not changed and are corrupt, no amount of money, nice cars, or mansions matter to us. Rend your hearts and receive the Holy Spirit!

In the Bible, God’s prophecy is fulfilled in near future, distant future, and in end time. The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurred in Acts 2, it is occurring even today, and it will happen when the day of the Lord comes. The natural response to the day of the LORD will happen in the distant future or in the end time when Jesus comes again. As verses 30-32 describes, we’ll see the wonders of God in the heavens and on the earth. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood. Such a dreadful and horrible day is coming, but everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved. (32) Chapter 3:15-16 repeats the day of the LORD. But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel. (3:15-16)

Third, God’s judgment and salvation. (3:1-21) Chapter 3:1-16 teaches us God’s judgment against all nations who invaded his people, Israel. God will gather all of them in the valley of Jehoshaphat and judge them one by one according to what they did to Israel. God will swing a sickle to judge them. The day of the LORD is the day of judgment for God’s enemies, but the day of restoration and salvation for God’s people. This will happen when Jesus comes again. When Jesus comes again, he will judge the living and the dead. He will judge those who sinned against God, and bring his people into his kingdom as a farmer collects his crops. At that time, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved. The Lord will be a refuge for his people.

We suffer much because of this pandemic. As the swarm of locusts devastated the field and grain, COVID-19 devasted all aspects of our life spiritually, mentally, physically, economically, and socially. Still, we are struggling with this virus. But we believe that the day of the LORD is coming. The day of salvation and the day of restoration will come in near future. As the Bible says, this virus also will pass by. God will restore our business, school, and church. Above all, he will heal our broken hearts and wounds and fill us with his Spirit. Our God is faithful and he is gracious and compassionate. He will bring us back to normal. He restores and restarts. Verse 18 says, “***In that day the mountain will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the LORD’s house and will water the valley of acacias.***” People are afraid of another pandemic in the near future. But the Bible says, “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.” In Revelation 21 John saw the vision of new heaven and new earth. He said that the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and that new heaven and new earth is coming with our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, “*Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell among them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passes away.*” (Rev 21:3-4) There will be no virus in the new heaven and new earth. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will enter this new heaven and new earth. Amen!