

Feb. 19, 2021

Text: Joel 2:12-14

“Even now,” declares the LORD,
“return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning.”

Rend your heart

and not your garments.

Return to the LORD your God,

for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.

Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

Devotion: Karen McCarty

Wait! What? The Lord will let me return no matter what? Even if my heart is divided between worries about COVID, isolation, finances, family, and so many more things? Even with all that baggage on my heart, he still wants me back?

The Lord’s answer is a huge YES! But he does not want just an outward show of repentance. He wants ALL my heart, and ALL yours. The Lord wants an undivided heart.

But HOW is it possible to give the Lord my *entire* heart with all the clutter in there?

Well, here is the good news in today’s reading: God is “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.”

And our time does not have a monopoly on calamity. The people of Joel’s time faced an impending horde of locusts. Rather than lose his head to fright, Joel coolly posed an interesting question: “Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing.” Surely the prophet saw that with God, all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26)

During this Lenten season, let’s turn from the sins of the world. Let’s repent of our sins and strive to return to the Lord with a whole, undivided heart.

The invitation has been sent. He is waiting.