



## Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

# "Joel" | The Story of Us series

Preached by Pastor Brady Boyd  
13 April 2025

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

A C T S 3 : 1 9 N I V

### Summary

*Have someone from your group read the following summary aloud.*

This Palm Sunday, Pastor Brady invited us to step into Holy Week not just with tradition, but with expectation—beginning in the unlikely pages of the Old Testament book of Joel. In a time marked by crisis, Joel called God's people to return to him not with outward rituals but with inward repentance. "Rend your hearts," the prophet says, "not your garments."

That same call echoes through today's message: God isn't moved by performance; he's after our hearts. Pastor Brady reminded us that revival doesn't begin in the crowd but in the quiet places of surrender, and when we come to God with genuine repentance, he meets us with compassion, mercy, and the promise of renewal.

At the heart of Joel's prophecy is a promise, that God will pour out his Spirit on all people—sons and daughters, old and young, servants and leaders alike. This promise is fulfilled at Pentecost and continues to be fulfilled today, which means that the barriers we build—across generations, genders, and economic status—are no match for the outpouring of God's presence.

As we prepare for Easter, this message reminds us that God still desires to dwell among his people. And he's looking for open hearts to fill.

## **Opening Prayer**

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

"Heavenly Father, thank you for this space and this moment. As we gather to reflect on your Word, we invite you to speak clearly and tenderly to our hearts. Open our eyes to see what you're doing. Open our ears to hear what you're saying. And open our hearts to respond with honesty and humility.

"As we consider the call to genuine repentance, give us the courage to look inward—not with shame, but with a deep desire to be made whole. Help us clear away anything that crowds out your Spirit so that we can make room for the fresh work you want to do in us.

"Guide our conversation. Let it be full of grace, truth, and insight. And as we begin Holy Week, prepare our hearts for a deeper encounter with Jesus—the One who came not just to forgive our sin, but to dwell with us in power. In his name we pray, Amen."

## **Getting Going**

When have you received something you didn't earn but deeply needed—whether a gift, a second chance, or a kind word? What impact did it have on you?

## **Discussion Questions**

*Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.*

1. What does it mean to "rend your heart and not your garments"? How is this different from outward religious activity?
2. How do you make room for more of God in your life? What might need to be removed?
3. What barriers do you see the Holy Spirit breaking down in today's Church?
4. When have you seen genuine repentance open the door for the Holy Spirit to work in your life?
5. How can we prepare our hearts during Holy Week for a fresh encounter with God?
6. How can we maintain a balance between religious activities and genuine heart transformation?

## **Making It Personal**

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.*

This week, take time each day to examine your heart before God. Identify one area where you've been focusing on outward religious activity—doing something out of

obligation or simply to “check a box”—rather than genuine heart change. Write it down and pray specifically about allowing God to transform that area of your life.

### **Key Takeaways**

*Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.*

Which of these points will you carry with you this week?

- God desires genuine heart change over religious activities.
- Making room for God requires removing competing priorities.
- The Holy Spirit breaks down barriers and unifies God's people.
- True repentance opens the door for spiritual renewal.

### **Closing Prayer**

*Have someone from your group close your time in prayer.*

“Lord Jesus, thank you for your promise to pour out your Spirit on all who call upon your name. Thank you that we don’t have to strive to earn your presence—it is a gift, freely given, poured out in love. May we treasure that gift afresh this week. In Jesus’ holy name we pray, Amen.”

### **Key Passage | Joel 2:12-13 NLT**

*These verses were highlighted during this week’s sermon and appear here for your reference.*

“That is why the Lord says, ‘Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.’ Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.”

### **Verses for Further Study**

- Joel 2:28-29
- Joel 3:17-18
- Acts 2:1-4

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