

# DAY 2 RETURN



## Joel 2:13

*Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in love..."*

The prophet Joel was one of the earliest writing prophets, lived around the same time as the prophet Elisha way way back- 830 BC & he preached to the people of Judah and led them in a great lament over a locust plague and a severe drought! He talked about "the day of the Lord" and God's judgment on sin. Joel honed in on the tragedy they'd experienced to give them the Lord's message of judgment but also the hope of repentance.

Our word for today is RETURN- the meaning of return is: "to come or go back to a place or a person." To return from someplace or person presupposes that you have left a place or a person. And these people had left God- they'd wandered away, and they didn't seem to think it was that big of a deal--- but to God, it was. He warns them to wake up and pay attention- and return to him.

T. Hudson, in the book we're following, Pauses for Lent, says that, whether we realize it or not, "OUR lives are always drifting away from their true home. And that we forget that WE aren't God- that we're often giving in to the temptations around us of money, sex & power. That dulls our attention to the cries of our sisters and brothers in need- and way too often, we focus only on ourselves. Do you agree with that? Do you notice yourself drifting away from God sometimes?

During Lent, God is reaching out and calling us home.... "the place where we live permanently, especially as a member of a family or household." He's calling us home, and in the process, reminding us about who we truly are. And about how important it is for us to let God really BE God in our lives... so that we can respond to our suffering neighbor... and to put it simply, we begin again with God. (St. Benedict was famous for this saying:- "Always, we begin again."

Only when the fierce love of God, most clearly seen in the Crucified One- Jesus Christ- pierces our hearts- will we respond with a returning love to Him. And during Lent, we take the time to listen, really listen for this good news: God Loves Us so very much and wants us to return home- whether we're far away or not so far. The season of Lent is an invitation for us to open our lives and hearts anew to this love, however far we may have drifted, and to return again to the God who longs for us.

## Daily Practice

Meditate on the word return throughout your day- and ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your awareness of God's love for you. Ask him to help you become more aware of the different ways in which his divine love comes to you: maybe it's through the smile of a stranger, the presence of a friend, the beauty of a sunset or a gentle rain, the enjoyment of a walk. Before you go to sleep, think back on these gifts of God's love, savor them, and give thanks for them.

The below reflections are written by congregants & staff of CPC. All reflections are following Trevor Hudson's book Pauses for Lent and are both heavily influenced and borrowed from his work. Any quotes without attribution should be credited to him.