

4Ws RETURN TO THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

October 18, 2026



WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Alive, All Because of Jesus, The God Who Forgives, Nothing But The Blood, Minamahal Ka, Holy Forever

WELCOME

Have you ever been so busy or distracted that you overlooked something important, until something happened that made you stop and pay attention? What happened?

WORD

Joel 1:1-5 (Read also Joel 2:11-14, Joel 2:25-32)

¹ The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel:

² Hear this, O elders,

And listen, all inhabitants of the land.

Has *anything like* this happened in your days

Or in your fathers' days?

³ Tell your sons about it,

And *let* your sons *tell* their sons,

And their sons the next generation.

⁴ What the gnawing locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten;

And what the swarming locust has left, the creeping locust has eaten;

And what the creeping locust has left, the stripping locust has eaten.

⁵ Awake, drunkards, and weep;

And wail, all you wine drinkers,

On account of the sweet wine

That is cut off from your mouth.

Have you ever looked back on your life and wondered, "How did I end up here?" You may once have been eager to read God's Word, worship Him, and share the gospel. But little by little, other priorities, unhealthy habits, or the desire to fit in may have taken His place.

Our hearts can deceive us. We may call it a busy season when we are actually prioritizing something else over God. Like someone floating in the ocean, we can drift without noticing. That is why we must return to the Lord with all our heart.

The book of Joel reminds us that God calls us to wake up, repent and be restored, and remember that He is the ultimate victor.

Joel describes a devastating locust plague that wiped out Israel's crops and livelihood. Through this crisis, God called every generation to pay attention and return to Him wholeheartedly. God uses wake-up calls to bring us back to Him because He loves us.

God's wakeup calls are meant to draw us back because He loves us. The greatest loss is not losing what we have, but losing sight of the God we need. Not every difficulty is punishment for sin, but every struggle can remind us how much we need the Lord.

RECOGNIZE GOD'S WAKE-UP CALL

Sin is serious because its consequences can be devastating. In Joel, the locusts stripped the land bare, and the people's rejoicing dried up. Sin may offer momentary pleasure, but it does not last. During a climb up Mount Pulag, one father shared this wisdom: "Never judge an experience by how you feel in the moment, but by how you feel afterward." Sin's temporary pleasure can lead to lasting regret. Sin is serious because it takes away our joy.

Sin also harms our worship and fellowship with God. When we hold on to sin, our worship and intimacy with the Lord suffer. One young man shared that he remained sexually pure because his relationship with God was worth far more than temporary pleasure. He did not want to trade his closeness with the Lord for sin.

Sin also affects others. Immorality can devastate a marriage and family, and addiction can wound a whole household. Sin is never merely private. Ultimately, the greatest consequence is facing the righteous judgment of our holy God.

Yet God does not leave us without hope. Joel 2:12 gives this invitation: "Return to me with all your heart." The One who warns us about sin is the same God who invites us back. He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness.

REPENT AND BE RESTORED

God calls us to wholehearted repentance. Joel says to rend our hearts, not merely our garments. In the Old Testament, tearing one's clothes could express sorrow, but outward signs do not necessarily mean the heart has changed. True

repentance is more than feeling sorry. It means turning away from sin and turning toward God.

Repentance involves action. If a phone number or device leads us into sin, we may need to remove it or change how we use it. We should bring our struggles into the light instead of hiding them in shame. God's kindness leads us to repentance. We approach Him with humility, not entitlement. He promises forgiveness, but not the removal of every earthly consequence.

Still, God is able to restore. Joel 2:25 promises that God will make up for the years the locusts have eaten. We may look back on seasons wasted through poor choices and feel that we have ruined our lives. But God is gracious and can bring restoration. Even when consequences remain, we can trust His goodness and justice.

The greatest blessing is not simply getting back what we lost, but getting back to the God we need. He restores our relationship with Himself and gives His Spirit to empower us to live out His will.

Restoration is an expression of God's Grace

Restoration is not a formula for getting everything we want. We return to God because of who He is and because He deserves our worship. He may not remove every consequence, but His forgiveness is real, His presence is our greatest blessing, and His promises give us hope.

REMEMBER GOD IS THE ULTIMATE VICTOR

Joel points to a day when God will judge the nations and bring injustice to account. The world's brokenness is not the final chapter. God is the ultimate victor and will make all things right. The Lord who brings judgment is also a refuge for His people.

Do not delay returning to Him. Today, His invitation remains open. We can trust His authority, justice, and protection.

How can we return to the Lord? Romans 10 teaches that if we confess Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. We cannot stand before God on our own righteousness. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, and through His finished work on the cross, we can be forgiven. The promise is for everyone who calls on the Lord.

So do not wait. Recognize God's wakeup call, repent and trust Him to restore you according to His wisdom, and remember that He is the ultimate victor. We return not because we can bargain for a better life, but because God is gracious, compassionate, and worthy of our worship. Even when consequences remain and the world seems unjust, we can hold on to His promises and live by faith.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. In what area of your life might you be drifting away from God without realizing it? What might God be using to get your attention?
2. What is the difference between simply feeling sorry for our sins and genuinely repenting? Is there something specific God is calling you to turn away from or surrender to Him?
3. Knowing that God is our refuge and ultimate victor (Joel 3:16), how should this change the way you face your current struggles, fears, or uncertainties? What would it look like to trust Him more fully this week?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray that God will reveal any area of your life where you have been drifting away from Him. Ask for a humble heart to repent, turn back to Him, and trust in His faithfulness. Care by reaching out to someone who is struggling or feeling far from God. Listen without judgment, offer encouragement, and help them take a step toward the Lord. Share how God's grace gives us hope and invites us to return to Him. Look for an opportunity to share the gospel with someone who needs to know Jesus and experience His forgiveness.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- For the Philippines as it hosts the 49th ASEAN Summit on November 16–18: pray for wisdom for the Philippines and ASEAN leaders, peaceful and fruitful discussions, regional cooperation, and safety for all delegates, residents, and security personnel.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- For the rest of the Israeli hostages to be restored to their families safely. For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory.
- For the civil war in Syria to end peacefully, protection for Christians and other

minorities, and freedom from oppression for Syrians. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout the country.

- Pray for Sudan and persecuted Christians there; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.
- Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ affected by the disaster in Nepal, especially those who remain missing. Pray that they will be found safely, and that God will strengthen and comfort their families. May the Lord provide for their needs and give them hope and courage as they face the days ahead.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, DLeaders, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Joel 2:12-13

12 "Yet even now," declares the Lord,
"Return to Me with all your heart,
And with fasting, weeping and mourning;
13 And rend your heart and not your garments."
Now return to the Lord your God,
For He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness
And relenting of evil.