

“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.

29 Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

30 I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

31 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

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.

Generously Poured Out

A little dab will do yah. It's the idea that you only need a little bit of something in order to accomplish a job. It's an idea that we try to instill in our children when we give them glue sticks or glue bottles. You only need a little bit. But there are some adults who seem to hold to another mantra: "A big ole glob will do the job." The more the merrier and the better. But the right amount of whatever is needed depends on the work at hand. But does God give a little dab or a big ole glob?

God knows the right amount of anything that we need. But the people to whom Joel wrote looking forward to a portion smaller than a little dab that wouldn't do. A plague of locusts left little if anything edible. Joel writes to those on the brink of disaster but in spite of such circumstances God still promises to provide and pour out generously his Spirit over all people.

Have you been there? Maybe it doesn't feel like God has poured out his Spirit at all. You can't see any miracle or evidence of God's hand at work in life. Even if you are

standing on the brink of disaster Joel still comforts us in such circumstances with the promise of a God who pours generously his spirit on all people.

Joel may not have felt Spirit filled but instead poured out and exhausted among God's people. Joel is an anonymous prophet. We don't know anything about him. We don't know anything about his ministry. We don't even know when he wrote be it before or after the exile. Joel could have written any time between 850 and 400 BC. We don't know much about Joel.

But we do know Israel was inundated with locust. Not just a few but a swarm which was a scary thing. Swarms today still reach biblical proportions destroying everything in their path. They eat every green thing and what they don't destroy the fire that ensues does. There isn't even a little dab. This is a disaster.

And yet Joel points to it as an object lesson. This disaster is what they deserve. Joel calls them to assemble and hear God's judgment. He calls them to repent and return to the Lord *Because the Day of the Lord is near; who can endure it?* This is just a little dab of God's judgement over sin.

You may not feel Spirit filled. Most of us would probably question, "Why would anyone listen to me?" I'm unqualified to speak on behalf of God. I'm a nobody. There are people who come to me saying, "Pastor, You don't know what I've done. I can't possibly be forgiven by God, let alone speak for him." Then on the other end of the spectrum are those who proclaim, "I come from a long line of Lutherans. You don't have to worry about me..." There are those influenced by an individualistic spirit and say the church is unnecessary, and all we need is a personal relationship with God.

We don't have locust plagues like Joel. We have ways of monitoring them and scrambling planes and trucks with pesticides. If crops fail in one part of our country we easily ship in what's needed from another portion. We don't have a famine of food but what about famine of truth? We have false prophets and teachers who speak a big ole glob of their own dreams and visions, pointing away from God's Word and Baptism, telling you to search your heart for little dabs of feelings or proof of God's blessing. False teachers redirect our attention to current events, fulfillment of end times prophecies, last days, blood, fire, and smoke... and none of that will do.

Meanwhile we may completely forget the real miracle among us. No, it's not the miraculous removal of cancer. The restoration of sight of the blind. But the fact that we believe. Our pride thinks, "That's not me. It wasn't that big of a miracle that I've been

saved.” But until the Holy Spirit worked faith in our hearts and directed us away from self to our Savior we were dead in sin, unable to do God. That not a single one of us could endure the Day of the Lord.

At Pentecost, the crowd was *cut to the heart* when Peter pointed out how they had crucified the Messiah. They cried out, “What should we do?” Peter answered, “*Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.*”(Acts 2:38).

Peter points those who had crucified the Messiah to the forgiveness they have in Christ. Like Peter, Joel spoke hope in a time of despair. They had abandoned and turned away from God they would not be put to shame. *I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

Does that sound familiar? Blood, fire, billows of smoke? Maybe not to our eyes and ears but what about the temple experience? The chosen lamb without blemish or defect whose blood was spilled and body burned. Joel points to the sacrificial system and to the lamb that took away their guilt and shame. John the Baptizer pointed to the same Lamb, Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus poured out his blood, his life for the world. At his death the sun was darkened and the moon turned to blood, even Martin Luther said that blood could be translated as reddened or darkened. It was all a sign pointing people to Jesus.

The one to whom the Spirit points our attention. The purpose is so that, “*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*” (Joel 2:32). It’s almost as if every word of Scripture points us back to Jesus. That’s because it does. But a dead Jesus wouldn’t do much good for any of us. That’s why the resurrection was verified by many and multiple eyewitness accounts. The apostles who were terrified of what might happen next were empowered by the outpouring, the big ole glob, of the Spirit on Pentecost.

God verified his Word and the words of the apostles with miracles, signs, and wonders. Peter says, “*this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.*” They are fulfilled here on Pentecost. There is no need to look for blood moons, pillars of fire, or smoke. God has poured out his Spirit generously. On all people. No longer was the Word of God limited to the line of the priesthood and the sons of Aaron. God’s Word and God’s Spirit was given without restriction based on nationality, social status, or gender. Not even age matters

young or old. God's Spirit is not restricted based on holiness or personal piety, or power, but freely given to every kind of people... even upon those considered slaves.

We too bring hope to a world suffering in times of despair, to those who have abandoned and turned away from God we bring peace and comfort in pointing to the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world. That doesn't always mean there will be a restoration in this world. But it does mean hope for the next. Through your Words God sends his Spirit and works miracles. He pours out forgiveness abundantly among us and through our brothers and sisters, his church, he directs us where he can be found.

Right here in his Word. Even our children can point us back to Jesus. It's the gift often taken for granted. We may long for the by-gone days, wishing, "If only I could have been there." You have to realize how much the Old Testament Prophets would have loved to trade positions with us. It's difficult to determine the work of the Holy Spirit during the Old Testament. We know, "*No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit,*" so we know the Spirit was at work. We also know that prophecy was limited to the few, those whom God had chosen to speak through. Old Testament Prophets were few and far between and at times a word from the Lord was rare.

We have his Word which clearly portrays Christ crucified. We have Baptism where God has promised to pour out his Spirit on all people regardless of age. He directs us to where he can be found. To his word which has been confirmed by miracles, signs, and wonders which were given not to direct our attention to the apostles and prophets but to verify and authenticate his Word. That doesn't mean we will see visions and dream dreams, speak gibberish and handle snakes. The promise is there will no longer be only a chosen few who are prophets, but as Peter says, "*You are a Royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession to declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*" You are all priests. You are all able to forgive sin. You are all able to proclaim the truth of God's Word and work in your life. The only difference between you and me is that I've been called by the church to do so in a public way.

That Jesus has risen from the dead. Miracles still happen not minor miracles of healings and such but major ones. The dead come alive. The Holy Spirit is poured out through water and the word. Sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit comes to us in God's Word, empowering us to live and act as priests in the Kingdom of God, reminding us, "We have nothing to lose." There is no chance that your eternal life will ever be in danger. May the Holy Spirit empower you to speak boldly and freely the wonderful work that Jesus has done for you.

Maybe it will be a little dab here and there. Maybe it will be a big ole glob that does the job. Either way it is God who pours out his Spirit generously on all people even you. That Spirit points you back to the Lamb of God, his sacrifice for our sin and that gives us the full assurance to tell others of the big ole glob that God has given once for all. Amen.