



God Is Calling Are You Listening?

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Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: On this Ash Wednesday, 2022, let us ☞admit our sins, ☞be sorry and trust in Jesus, ☞rejoice in our rightness with God, and ☞live in ways that will both ✦honor our Father in heaven and ✦be a blessing to us now and forever!

1. **Old Testament:** [Joel 2:12-19 NAS-95](#)

- a. Notice the Components of Repentance: return, fast, weep, mourn, rend: 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.”
- b. Notice the Encouragement: gracious, compassionate, slow, relenting: [Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.](#)
¹⁴ [Who knows whether He will *not* turn and relent And](#)

leave a blessing behind Him, *Even* a grain offering and a drink offering For the LORD your God?

- c. Notice that Everyone should Gather: ¹⁵ Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, ¹⁶ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, Assemble the elders, Gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room And the bride out of her *bridal* chamber.
- d. Notice the Seriousness of Prayer: ¹⁷ Let the priests, the LORD'S ministers, Weep between the porch and the altar, And let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, And do not make Your inheritance a reproach, A byword among the nations. Why should they among the peoples say, "Where is their God?""
- e. Notice the LORD's Favorable Response: ¹⁸ Then the LORD will be zealous for His land And will have pity [*mercy*] on His people. ¹⁹ The LORD will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I am going to send you grain, new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied *in full* with them; And I will never again make you a reproach among the nations."

HYMN: *O How He Loves You and Me*

2. **Epistle:** **2 Corinthians 5:20b – 6:2 NAS-95**

- a. Notice the Plea to Be Right with God: ^{20b} ...we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He [*God the F*] made Him [*God the S*] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf [*Good Friday*], so that we might become the righteousness of God [*being seen by God the F as perfectly right*] in Him [*Jesus*].

- b. Notice the Plea to Not Miss Out: 6:1 And [us – me and my missionary team] working together with Him [Jesus], we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain [for no benefit] -- ² for He says, “AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.” Behold, **now** is “THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,” behold, **now** is “THE DAY OF SALVATION”

HYMN: *O Lord, throughout These Forty Days*

3. **Holy Gospel: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 NAS-95**

- a. Notice the Instruction to Do the Right Things for the Right Reasons: ¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”
- b. Give to the Poor in Secret: ² “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³ “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.”
- c. Pray in Secret: ⁵ “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father

who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.” ...

- d. Fast in Secret: ¹⁶ “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face [*that is, look normal*] ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.”
- e. Treasure Eternal Things: God, Bible, Eternal Souls: ¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Let Us Pray: Dear Lord Jesus, thank You so much for all You did to defeat the forces of evil and win our salvation! In response, help us to be sorry for sins, trust in You for eternal life, and gladly honor You in our daily lives!

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