

A Stranger Than Fiction Truth - You Can Experience

by Ian Paisley

God can restore lost time in a spiritual sense, giving us a second chance to make the most of the time we have.

Duration: 28:58

Scripture: Joel 2:21-32, Matthew 7:7, Acts 2:19-21, Ephesians 3:20

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Gods Empowerment"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of God to restore and empower believers. He uses the analogy of a strong swimmer who, with the help of God's omnipotence, can quickly recover from drifting and even surpass their original position. The preacher quotes from the Bible, specifically Joel 2:26, to highlight the promise of satisfaction and praise for those who trust in God. He warns against living graceless lives and urges lukewarm Christians to fervently pursue a passionate relationship with God. The sermon concludes with a call to confess worldly desires and seek a deeper spiritual life.

Transcript

Pick up the authorized version of Holy Scripture in front of you in the pew and turn with me to the second chapter of the prophecy of Joel. Joel, of course, is the second minor prophet. You get Daniel and then you come to the minor prophets, Hosea and then Joel.

And it's the second chapter. We're coming to the second chapter of this book, the book of Joel. And we're reading at verse 21 to the end of the chapter.

The 21st verse of the second chapter of the book of Joel to verse 32. We read it together, let us read it heartily. Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord will do great things.

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness do spring. For the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God.

For he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the flats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will rejoice, I will restore to you the years of the lugus of England, the

canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the fammer worm, my great army, which I sent among you.

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that shall deal wondrously with you, and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and none else, and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass that afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days when I pour out my Spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverances, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call. God will bless this reading from the infallible book of his own inspiring. Amen and Amen.

Turn with me to the second chapter of Joel, verses 25 and 26. At the prayer meeting on Wednesday night, I spoke upon this subject, and we had a great time of refreshment and blessing. And I want to return to it today, because I believe it's a timely message for us, which we should receive and practice and enjoy and know it's the reward of it.

Verse 25, Joel chapter 2 and verse 26, And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker worm and the caterpillar and the fammer worm, my great army, which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you, and my people shall never be ashamed. Years, when they are gone, cannot literally be brought back again.

The past time is gone forever. But that past time will return to you and you will be able to spend it again. That is a deception.

Time once gone is gone forever. But while time cannot return literally to us again, God can do a great miracle. And he can return to us the lost time in a spiritual sense.

What did these locusts eat? Not the literal years of time, but the fruits that should have been the blessing of the people in those years of lost time. Wasted blessings can be restored. Unripened fruits of years can be returned.

The opportunity of wasted years can also be returned. The impossible can be made possible. God can and does do the impossible.

All things the Bible tells us are possible to him that believeth. Let us hear and heed this promise of sovereign free Greece. How wonderful it is.

I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten. God gave back the lost harvest by giving enlarged harvest now and in the future. Your life blighted and destroyed by the destruction scavenger locusts, by the worms that bring canker, by the devouring caterpillars and ruining power worms.

All that can be gloriously and wonderfully and eternally reversed. It is a wonder. But God is a wonder working.

What wreckage is pictured here and what a wonder is promised here. God can recall the destructive army which he himself sent. Please notice that.

He said that they are his great army which he sent. But God can recall them and instead can send a reviving, restoring army to reverse the damage done and to bring about a glorious remedy. We might first of all inquire today.

What years are these that have brought so much havoc? First of all, they are years of sin. Unrepentant of sin that made us degenerate and impetuous. Years of sin, unconverted years, backslidden years, unbelieving years.

Remember we are not talking about days or weeks or months, we are talking about years. Of those years of Christlessness, what havoc they brought to our souls. Of those years of sinning, what damage they did to our souls.

All of these can be reversed. Old sinners, what a blight your sins have made on you in the field of time. And what a blight they have caused and influenced other men and women to feel.

Your influence has been for hell and not for heaven. Yet God says, I can restore the years the peluches have eaten. Those years are all labor wasted years.

The wages of your labors have not been enrichment, but rather more and more impoverishment. Your toil has been slavery and your reward has been the morsel of destruction. The locust years are also years of bitter disappointment.

You have looked for harvest, but the locusts have come and eaten it up. The worm has put a canker into it. The caterpillar has devoured it.

The palmer worm has annihilated it. Earth's cups, you have found, have always been salted. And by drinking them, you have increased your thirst, but you have never quenched it.

These years are fruitless years. The rich man died, but all his riches he left behind. His riches were clouds without water.

Poor souls have become cumbers of the ground. Life has not one ray of harvest hope. They are graceless years.

The soul who does not employ the means of grace will be mighty low in grace. Graceless souls are disgraced. They live in poverty because they are too lazy to go to the bank.

They are like the prophet Hosea's silly doves. They have no heart. Graceless souls.

May Christ arouse you today if you are a graceless soul. Lukewarmness is a blight and a curse. Your religion should not be lukewarm.

It should be steaming hot for God. Alas, today we do not have many steaming hot Christians around. There is nothing like the first joy of a new born soul.

I met a man this week and he was telling me that he took a holiday out in the far west. And he ran into a man who had heard he was from Northern Ireland. And he said to the man, the man said to him, Do you know a fellow called Ian Paisley? He said yes, everybody knows Ian Paisley in Northern Ireland.

Well he said I want to bring you down to meet a man. And he took the man down to another man's house. And he said to the man, he said here is a man that actually knows Ian Paisley.

And the man looked at him, eyes filling with tears. And he said I thank God for Ian Paisley. I was a bigoted Romanist.

I hated the Bible, I hated the truth, I hated the gospel. But one day by accident I got onto the website and I heard this man preaching. And he said I could do nothing else but get down at the website machine that I had on.

And I came to Christ and I am gloriously and wonderfully saved. And that man told me, he said Mr Paisley that man has a Christian testimony second to none. He said he is what I would call a burning Christian.

It is that burning Christianity that is needed in us all today. Let us be those who have a religion that is steaming hot. Not a lukewarm religion.

These are also backslidden leaders. Of us God can look down and say ye did run well. What has hindered you? You know and I know the things that have hindered you.

We need to get rid of them. And we need to get rid of them now. We need to do with them what the sailors did with Jodah.

We need to throw them over the side and into the ocean. You did run well. You know what stopped you.

You know where you took the wrong turning. And I want to say to you you will never get back your joy, your peace, your happiness until you get back to the place where you lost out. You can only start again when you get back to the place.

But my text tells me about restoration. Not partial restoration. But restoration that is more than you ever had before.

Here is what God said. I will restore. Mr. Spurgeon in one of his sermons said this.

I have known men living orderly and good lives for many years. Yet they have attained or done nothing for their Lord. Such sober people move on and on and on and on.

But they make no progress. Steady, steady, steady, steady job drop. Life has no fire in them.

And they know no reason to be in order in love with Christ. They never get any breath for being really zealous. They never exhaust themselves with excitement.

They accomplish little from want of fire. I know a great many Christians about whom I have never had any fear of them ever being consumed by their vehemence, manner concerning the things that they believe. They are such proper people.

I believe if Jesus came into their street, they could not have enough breath to shout hallelujah. They are never warmed with enthusiasm. I soon hope to warm a marble statue.

These are the folks who after a while grow negligent. And the lucacy of the years of their regularity and all the gains of their sobriety. I am sorry Spurgeon said indeed to hear of a broken reputation or a profession openly disgraced.

But what a mercy it is when by this terrible means dead professors are driven to turn to God with full purpose of heart. When these who have slept in all the chill of propriety of spiritual death are aroused at last to seek God penitentially, we see no more of this jog-traught and dull commonplace. If restored by a renewal of spiritual strength before they have openly declined into sin that change is equally manifest.

Now they must fly like the wind before they could only creep like the snail. They must do everything at great heat with all their heart and all their soul and all their might. A month or so of such quickened intense work will often effect more result than years of slow, feeble, formal routine.

Oh to live while we can live. Once fully charged with divine power we can achieve as much in a day than we have performed in a year. If you as a preacher come back to God, Spurgeon said, and get the Holy Ghost to anoint you, one sermon preached in the power of the Holy Ghost will be worth ten thousand preached without it.

If you as a worker go to your Sunday school class with divine anointing resting upon you, there will be more children brought to Christ by a little of your living, loving teaching than ever were brought to Him by much of your unspiritual talk. Thus the Lord God, by His endowing us with greater power and firing us with fuller zeal, restores to us the years that the locusts have eaten. The strong swimmer will soon recover the space from which he drifted.

When omnipotence is in every stroke, the man is soon back in his right place and before long he is ahead of where he would have been. What does God say? He shall eat in plenty and be satisfied. And praise the name of the Lord your God that has dealt wondrously with you and my people shall never be ashamed.

What will the result of such an empowering of the Spirit of God be? What change will it make? Notice verse 26, we're going to be supplied. Ye shall eat in plenty. Verse 26, we're going to be satisfied.

Verse 26, we're going to be electrified. Verse 26, we're going to be glorified. And in verse 26, we're going to be magnified, supplied, satisfied, electrified, glorified, and magnified.

And it's such a baptism as that that the church needs, that this preacher needs, that you need, and every child of God needs. There are waters to swim in, yet some Christians stay in the waters that wouldn't even cover their waters. Forsake the ready water of worldliness and selfish pleasure.

Confess today you're a lukewarm Christian. Confess your worldly desires. Push your spiritual desires out of your heart.

Confess those misspent hours you've lived like a worldly. And there are some Christians, and if you know their private living, it's the living of a worldly, not the living of a person living in touch. But oh, today, every one of us can rise up and have our youth renewed like eagles.

I trust with both our hands, we will today seize the opportunity. To call upon God, that He would restore to us the years that the locusts turned your back and half-heartedness. And lukewarmness.

Fall in love with Christ. Weep over your loss, but join in delight of the promise that He'll restore you a mighty harvest a harvest so mighty that you'll have to call on others to help you in with the sheep. This is a day when opportunity knocks for you and I. Ask and receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you.

I picked up an old hymn book this week, edited by a man called David Denham. He was one of John Wesley's early preachers. And he said, God has told me in His book that if I seek Him, He will do more than I either ask or think.

Ephesians 3 and 20. And Denham sat down with his pen after reading those verses. He'll do more than we either ask or think.

And he wrote these words. The Lord is able to exceed and answer every cry. He is our help in every need, our refuge ever nigh.

He's able to maintain His right. His sovereignty make known to turn from darkness into light. And seek and save His own.

He's able to subdue each foe, give victory to a world. Able to bear His people through and all His will perform. He's able to remove our fears, to show our sins forgiven, to strengthen faith, to dry our eyes and make us all meet.

He's able to preserve in peace and make us always blessed from sin and sorrows to release and take us to His rest. Will we let God do it? Will we open our heart now and say, come in, blessed Holy Ghost, purge away my backsliding, my worldliness, my love for the present, my lack of tears for lost souls, my lack of interest in the salvation of my family, of my friends, of my neighbors, O blessed Spirit, come in. And when the Spirit comes in, He'll restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten and what a harvest there will be.

Think of those verses from the Word. Ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied. And praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you and my people shall never be ashamed.

May God write those words on all our hearts for Jesus' sake. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the solemn truths we have been singing and reading about and preaching about.

We pray that there may be hearts opened to Thee today, that souls may be purged and cleansed and empowered, and that our whole attitude to the things of God will be changed for Thou art already storing the years which the locusts have eaten. Do it mightily in this house for Jesus' sake. And everybody say, Amen.

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