

# THE PRELUDE TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

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Joel 2:11 states,

*“The Lord thunders at the head of his army; His forces are beyond number, and mighty are those who obey his command.”*

I believe like never before that there is a generation about to rise up that is going to be nameless, faceless, not worried about egos or how good they sound because God overshadows their talents. This generation isn't going to fight with each other because they have one clear enemy and that enemy is going down. This generation is an army that will jump over mountaintops. Things that were once obstacles for one generation are no longer obstacles for this generation. This will be a generation led by the Lord, their God. They will push past religion, the status quo of everyone else, to grab a hold of God in a new way and not half-way. This is a generation that is going to want God wholeheartedly.

This will be a generation like Joshua and Caleb. When everyone else said that the giants were too big and the gates were enormous and the city walls too impenetrable, Joshua and Caleb had a different spirit. As recorded in the Bible, they looked at things through the lens of how big their God was, and in light of God, they knew no one could be against them.

This will be a generation like David. The Goliaths, giants and obstacles will be seen as gateways to testimony and praise. This will be a generation that will lay their hands on the sick and the sick will recover. This generation will know that the book of Acts has no “Amen” at the end of it because we're supposed to be living it out today.

Later in that same chapter, Joel 2:28 says,

*“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...even on my servants...I will pour out my Spirit.”*

Ten years ago, eighteen of us at Youth Explosion Ministries started praying for the youth group we have now. I will continue to pray this verse until the day that young people start to prophesy and see things not as they are so that their faith is stirred to believe God for the impossible.

God has given us this explosive thing that He wants to do in and through this generation. But you see, right between this army and this outpouring, there is a prelude to His presence. There's something that actually happens that the Bible records in Joel, chapter two. Before the outpouring of God's Spirit, this is what verse 12 says,

*“Even now return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart, and not your garments. Return to the Lord... Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.”*

The prelude to the presence of God is a desperation to see God show up for God and for God alone. This desperation must be cultivated and never let go. It comes when we live every single day saying, “Lord, if it’s not for you, I have nothing, but if I have you, I have everything that I need.” It’s a desperation that you wake up to in the morning, and go to bed with at night. It’s not about a moment, but a continual longing in your heart to want to see God like you’ve never seen Him before. So much so, that the Bible says that it’s a desperation with “... *fasting and weeping and mourning.*” There’s a difference between simply not eating, and not eating because we want so much of God. The fasting is the exclamation point on the prayer of desperation.

The verse continues, “*Rend your heart, and not your garments.*” In the Old Testament, when the people would return to God, they would rip their garments and cover themselves with sackcloth and ashes. It was an understanding of their wretchedness. But there was a time when it became just an outward expression. God wants a rending of the heart, a tearing from top to bottom. God wants to see us on the inside and see that our heart beats after Him and Him alone. God wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

You might say, “Well, I don’t have that desperation. I don’t have the desire. I don’t have the fire.” To you, even the desire to want God comes from Him. Ask God to light you ablaze. You will be a generation that will go where others dared not go and will trust that if God spoke a word, He will do, because every promise in God is yea, and amen. To you who once had the fire but it has died out, ask God to reignite that fuse.

As a youth group in Glendale, Queens, we want the Spirit of God like never before. Young people are changed because God shows up. The Bible asks, “Can a leopard change its spots?” This generation isn’t going to change from the outward in but from the inward out. When God shows up, this generation will change from the inside out.

Whether they realize it or not, this generation has an inner longing for God because God created them for worship. There will be an awakening in them to see how much they need God and when you combine that desperation with faith, you can’t help but form an explosive experience.