

**A reading from Joel chapter 2 verses 1 through 2 and 12 through 17. You can find this reading on page 761 of your pew Bible.**

Blow a trumpet in Zion;  
    sound an alarm on my holy mountain!  
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,  
    for the day of the Lord is coming; it is near,  
a day of darkness and gloom,  
    a day of clouds and thick darkness!  
Like blackness there is spread upon the mountains  
    a great and powerful people;  
their like has never been before,  
    nor will be again after them  
    through the years of all generations.

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord,  
    “return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;  
    and rend your hearts and not your garments.”  
Return to the Lord your God,  
    for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;  
    and he relents over disaster.  
Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,  
    and leave a blessing behind him,  
a grain offering and a drink offering  
    for the Lord your God?  
Blow the trumpet in Zion;  
    consecrate a fast;  
call a solemn assembly;

gather the people.

Consecrate the congregation;

assemble the elders;

gather the children,

even nursing infants.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,

and the bride her chamber.

Between the vestibule and the altar

let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep

and say, "Spare your people, O Lord,

and make not your heritage a reproach,

a byword among the nations.

Why should they say among the peoples,

'Where is their God?'"

**The Word of the Lord.**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Please join me in praying Psalm 103.**

Leader: The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**People: He will not always chide,  
nor will he keep his anger forever.**

Leader: He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

**People: For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his steadfast love toward those  
who fear him;**

Leader: as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does he remove our transgressions  
from us.

**People: As a father shows compassion to his children,  
so the LORD shows compassion to those  
who fear him.**

**All: For he knows our frame;  
he remembers that we are dust.**

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as  
it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Leader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Mark.**

***People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

**Leader: The Gospel of the Lord**

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***