

Tuesday, September 1, 2026
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Essential Truth: *Spiritual barrenness should lead us to honest reflection before God.*

Scripture: Joel 1:9-13

⁹ The grain offering and the drink offering are cut off from the house of the Lord. The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord. ¹⁰ The fields are destroyed, the ground mourns, because the grain is destroyed, the wine dries up, the oil languishes. ¹¹ Be ashamed, O tillers of the soil; wail, O vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field has perished. ¹² The vine dries up; the fig tree languishes. Pomegranate, palm and apple, all the trees of the field are dried up, and gladness dries up from the children of man. ¹³ Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, O ministers of the altar. Go in, pass the night in sackcloth, O ministers of my God! Because grain offering and drink offering are withheld from the house of your God.

Observations:

- The priests in the temple mourn because the locust plague and drought have destroyed the grain crops and vineyards to the point that there is neither grain nor wine for the grain offerings and drink offerings.
- The severity of the locust plague has caused severe destruction to all crops. There is no grain, no wine and no oil.
- As all their sources of food dry up, joy becomes impossible to find.
- Coming full circle to where the passage begins, the priests of the temple are instructed to mourn in sackcloth because there is no grain or wine for the grain offering and drink offering.

Application: Like the locust plague we read of in Joel, the drought of 1988-1990 was legendary in North Dakota. Many farm families would leave the farm forever because of the drought and resulting economic hardship. There was discouragement and sadness. The barrenness of the land stripped the people of joy. For the Christian, growing distant from Jesus will bring a spiritual barrenness that will strip us of our spiritual joy. The busyness of our lives, often doing very important things, can make it difficult to spend time daily with the Lord. Days can turn into weeks which can very easily and unintentionally turn into months without spending meaningful and important time in the presence of the Father. But He is always there, ready and waiting for us to return.

Prayer:

Father, forgive me for not giving you the place in my life that is rightly yours. You have promised to draw near to me if I will draw near to you. By the power of your Spirit, please help me to make spending time with you a daily priority in my life.

