



"The Hope Heard Round the World" - July 5, 2026

Sermon by: Dr. Patricia Batten

Group Leader Notes

In this powerful message marking the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, Dr. Patricia Batten shares the story of Lucy Clark, wife of Lexington Pastor Jonas Clark, to explore how God meets His people in seasons of suffering and uncertainty. Drawing from Joel 2, she reminds us that hardship can either make us bitter or lead us to repentance and deeper dependence on God. Through the hope found in the innocent blood of Jesus, we are invited to face both life's hardest days and our future with confidence—not fear—knowing God's grace, justice, and redemption are greater than our circumstances.

Main Scripture Reading: Joel 2:12–14 (NIV)

Group Discussion: Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. **Dr. Batten contrasted two responses to suffering: becoming bitter or becoming better.** Can you think of a difficult season in your own life? What helped (or could have helped) you turn toward God instead of away from Him?
2. **The sermon emphasized that repentance is more than feeling sorry—it is returning to a life of dependence on God.** What are some ways people today live independently of God, and what does genuine dependence on Him look like in everyday life?
3. **Using the book of Joel, Pat showed that God is both gracious and just.** Why is it important to hold together both God's mercy and His justice instead of focusing on only one of those truths?
4. **The message connected the "innocent blood" of Joel with the innocent blood of Jesus shed on our behalf.** How does Christ's sacrifice change the way we face guilt, suffering, and even the future?
5. **The Pat concluded that those who trust in Christ can face the future with hope rather than fear.** What fears about the future are most common today, and how does the gospel offer a different perspective?

Let's Pray

<https://youtu.be/PAjx5hKnvWM?si=m-uHEeJhBDtOMKyq>



This summer, in our Summer Reading sermon series, we're exploring the grand story of Scripture through the four major acts of the Bible: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation.

We'll see how God has been at work throughout all ages—and how God is at work right now. Along the way, we'll gain more biblical understanding and meaningful, life-shaping applications.

Our hope is that, together, we will:

- Discover joy in reading God's Word
- See the powerful, unified arc of Scripture
- Understand God's redemptive work for all people and all things in Jesus
- Embrace the invitation to join Him in that work today

Click the link below for more.

<https://www.grace.org/summerreading/>