

October 26, Ordinary 30C (Joel 2:23-32; Psalm 65)

The day of the Lord is terrifying.

by [Songbok Bob Jon](#) in the [October 2025](#) issue

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“Dad, I am hungry,” says my seven-year-old son, Joshua.

“But you just had dinner one hour ago,” I reply. He insists that he’s hungry anyway. I open the pantry and refrigerator to see what we have inside. Chips? Yogurt? Cereal?

My 11-year-old son, Daniel, suddenly appears from behind me and says, “Dad, I am also hungry.”

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray persistently and to trust that God will grant them their wishes, just as even evil parents give their children good gifts such as fish or eggs and not bad ones like snakes or scorpions (Luke 11:11-12). “Let’s go have a fish burger at McDonald’s,” I say to my sons. Daniel shouts in joy, as this is his favorite food. Joshua says he’d rather have a cheeseburger.

Many of us have jobs that provide enough income to sustain ourselves and our family. But what if there were no supply of food to purchase? We experienced this disruption in supply during the early stage of the COVID pandemic. Many grocery shelves were empty. Thankfully, this shortage in supply did not last too long. Imagine it had gone on for two years. Your children are crying out in hunger at home, but you cannot find food anywhere. That is what is happening in Gaza today, as Palestinian children die of starvation and malnutrition while the Israeli government restricts humanitarian aid.

When Joel prophesies, he addresses the land that has suffered drought and “swarming locusts.” While I have never seen such a mass of locusts, Patheos columnist John Holbert wrote in a 2013 post about witnessing the army of locusts that swept Phoenix in the 1950s. He vividly recalls stepping on several inches of dead locusts for days after the insects swarmed across his town. While other prophets proclaim that the people invited this misery by abandoning their covenant

with God, Joel offers no clear answer as to why the kingdom of Judah is suffering this misery. The cries of many fathers and mothers in that same place continue today in the wailings of parents in Gaza.

Although the day of the Lord is terrifying, God promises restoration in the devastated land by sending the “early rain for your vindication.” There will be sacks full of grain, overflow of wine and oil, and praise among people, as God proclaims, “My people shall never again be put to shame.” God restores the physical condition of God’s people and God’s land, but God does not stop there. God also restores God’s relationship with God’s people by sending God’s spirit to all flesh regardless of their age, gender, or social status. Therefore, Elizabeth Achtemeier suggests in her *New Interpreter’s Bible* commentary that Joel’s message is not limited to the Judeans, since God’s spirit ensures “the opportunity of turning” for everyone who seeks the Lord as the God of salvation.

The author of Psalm 65 shares such a radical vision of restoration and inclusion: “To you all flesh shall come.” In his *Connections* commentary, David Gambrell writes that Psalm 65 calls us to “broaden our horizons, to consider the universal scope of God’s love for the world, including care for creation, feeding the hungry, and delivering the oppressed.”

My parents used to tell me, “You should consider yourself lucky that you were not born 50 miles up north.” What they meant was that I should be grateful that I was not born in North Korea. The BBC reports that North Korea is experiencing its worst case of starvation since the closure of its borders in 2020, which stopped imports of grain, fertilizers, and machinery from China. Through confidential interviews with three anonymous North Koreans, the BBC shared the stories of people in Pyongyang who die from starvation or, in their hopelessness, from suicide.

Is this the kind of story that only belongs to North Korea or Gaza? We also find those who are stripped and bruised by systemic injustice in our own neighborhoods. In this world, with the growing gap between the rich and poor and between the full and hungry, Joel proclaims God who continues to pour God’s spirit on all flesh. He challenges us to declare and live out God’s radical vision of healing and restoration.
—SBJ