

A call to remain faithful

From reading 12/8

Preached: Sunday Dec 13, 2020

Introduction

- Want to share again from our reading
- The theme is reiterated here and in 2nd Peter, both of which we've read recently
- I believe the Spirit is trying to wake up God's people to the reality we are living in
- Reading from Jude. See Jude's own introduction in **Jude 1:3-4** *Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people. 4 I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*
- Jude is writing to believers to encourage them to hold on *defend* the faith that God has given them
- *Ungodly* people have wormed their way into the church teaching (and living like) God's grace is simply a means to live immoral lives.
- Jude writes to refute that theology and instruct God's people in how to live when it becomes prevalent
- **Show Purpose Slide** This is a summary of why the letter was written
 - Urge for a defense of the faith (needed now, more than ever)
 - Expose the ungodly among them

- Stand strong in the end!

Exegesis

Now let's turn our attention to the text, and speak about v17-22

Spiritless "Christians"

Jude 17-22 *But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ predicted. 18 They told you that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires. 19 These people are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They follow their natural instincts because they do not have God's Spirit in them.*

Prophecy

- Apostles prophesied. Probably referring to 2 Peter 3:3-4 *Most importantly, I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. 4 They will say, "What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created."*
- There will be an infiltration into the church from people with different motivations than those of a true Christian
- Peter prophesied it, Jude reiterates it.
- These will doubt Christ's return - with it's reward, and its judgment

Their motives

- But they will doubt the turn of Christ and are only focused now. (V18 - their only purpose in life is to satisfy their ungodly desires)

- **This is beginning.** The whole Gospel of late has been focused on meeting the needs of the here and now!
- The focus of the American church is meeting the “felt need” - about helping people satisfy their immediate need
- Just tells us they are driven by their natural instincts - they don't have the Holy Spirit inside of them

Their influence

- They will cause division in the church
- Truly there has been much of this lately. The church is divided and powerless - focused on the here and now
- They will influence people away from being ready to meet Christ when he appears - and deceive them into believing it's ok to live for ourselves!

What should the believer be doing? - Part 1 - To be ready (V20-22)

- *But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love.*

But you

- v17 starts with this phrase - reminding us of the prophesied coming times
- v20 starts - telling us how to live differently than those *spiritless christians* he's just described.

Build each other up

- I've preached this theme recently

- We are called to minister to others in the faith: *build **EACH OTHER** up*
- These last days are taking a toll on the faith of believers
- When we come together - we are responsible to one another - tasked with helping to build the faith of our brother or sister up!
- How are we doing this for the fellow Christians? How are we doing this for this local assembly?

Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit

- We are called to pray in the last days
- This is a recurring theme in the New Testament epistles
- The expectation is that we are praying!
- Not just praying, but praying in the Spirit
- See Romans 8:26 (Spirit's intercession for us)
- This how we build ourself up! We are called to build up others in their faith, but by praying in the Spirit, we are built up! See **1 Cor 14:4 (NIV)** (4) *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...*
- See **Ephesians 6:18** *Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.* (Part of the armor of God passage)

Keep our eyes set on His salvation

- *and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life.*
- Our focus is the appearing of our Lord
- He will come with the reward of eternal life
- When he comes our salvation will be sight
- We are waiting for his appearance, and the mercy he will give and His welcome into eternal life
- It's a *future focus*. We've not already attained it! So many in the church are on cruise control - having made salvation a past experience.
- We hold by faith His promise of salvation - and await His return

- Paul never lost sight of the fact that one day Christ would appear and bring His salvation. He knew it was by God's grace
- See **1 Cor 15:9-10** *For I am the least of all the apostles. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church. But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me –and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.*
- Because we've received His grace - it should be at work in us to finish the work God has for us!

Results

- See v21 *In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God's love*
- By building up the faith of our brothers and sisters, by praying in the Spirit and keeping our eyes focused on His salvation - we will keep ourselves safe in His love
- We have a part to play - and if we refuse to do so, we may be deceived away!

What should the believer be doing? - Part 2 - When a believer struggles (v22-23)

- See the final verses of this section: *And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. 23 Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment. Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.*
- In these last days - part of our responsibility for our brothers is to show them mercy when they waver
- **Note:** We won't do this, unless we are fixed on the mercy we will receive. When we think about our need

- We are humans, and we will struggle - but God has shown us mercy - and we can show it to one another. Remember **Matt 5:7** *Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*
- We are not to judge or criticize, but be merciful to our brothers and sisters in the middle of their struggles
- We are to *rescue them!* from hells flames. We don't write them off or wash our hands of them. We are to snatch them from hell
- **Caution:** We can show mercy to the sinner, but still hate the sin. We don't want to get caught in the same trap!

Application / closing

- Division in the church with many believers wanting a "self" based Christianity (which is not Christian at all). Be on the lookout for it and defend against it
- We might be caught up in it but we are called to:
 - Encourage and build up the faith of our brothers and sisters
 - Pray with the Spirit's power
 - Set our eyes on Christ's appearing
- Help those who are wandering, but don't be sucked in