

“Remain Faithful”

Jude 17-23

This morning we will continue in our study of the Book of Jude. Last week we looked at the three characteristics of a false teacher and we found that they are a threat to the church especially to those who are weak or uncommitted in their walk with God. We also saw that their fruit was worthless and would be seen by all through the way they speak, their actions, and their behavior.

This morning our study will continue with **Jude 17-23**

But you, my dear friends, must remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ told you, that in the last times there would be scoffers whose purpose in life is to enjoy themselves in every evil way imaginable. Now they are here, and they are the ones who are creating divisions among you. They live by natural instinct because they do not have God's Spirit living in them. But you, dear friends, must continue to build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith. And continue to pray as you are directed by the Holy Spirit. Live in such a way that God's love can bless you as you wait for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you. Show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgement. There are still others to whom you need to show mercy, but be careful that you aren't contaminated by their sins.

Up until this point Jude has been writing to the church in warning against false teachers, or shall we say “false teachings” as well. But Jude changes gears here and begin to encourage the church to stand strong in their faith. In fact, Jude uses the term “dear friends” otherwise translated “beloved.” It is a term being used to address one who is dear to his heart. It is a relationship of love and compassion that stirs Jude to continue to encourage the church.

1. Remember what has been said before. (17-18)

Jude's message of warning is not the first. The Apostles, those who were sent out by Jesus himself, had much to say about false teachers. Jesus told us to embrace his messengers as if it were himself. **John 13:20**

Truly, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming my Father who sent me.

The words of the Apostles are clear about false teachers. Look **Acts 20:29**.

I know full well that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come among you after I leave, not sparing the flock.

*Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe; they will follow lying spirits and teachings that come from demons. These teachers are hypocrites and liars. They pretend to be religious, but their consciences are dead. **I Timothy 4:1-2***

*You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. You must stay away from people like that. **II Timothy 3:5***

*For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. They will reject the truth and follow strange myths. **II Timothy 4:3-4***

*But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach their destructive heresies about God and even turn against their Master who bought them. Theirs will be a swift and terrible end. Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of them, Christ and his true way will be slandered. In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction is on the way. **II Peter 2:1-3***

*Many deceivers have gone out into the world. They do not believe that Jesus Christ came to earth in a real body. Such a person is a deceiver and an antichrist. **II John 7***

The Apostles had great insight into what the future was going to look like. The characteristics laid out are very similar to our current society. They said:

- The false teachers are a threat to the church.
- They are religious only in appearance.
- They follow teachings that are demonic.
- They have a numbed conscious.
- They love themselves, pleasure for themselves, and material possessions more than God.
- They are disrespectful to any authority, and even make fun of God.
- They are ungodly in their behavior.

We live in a society where there is a rise of believers in other religions such as Buddhists, Hindus, New Age, and Muslims. Yet, even then it is evident that those who are a part of the church have embraced false teaching. In the new Bridger generation (those between the ages of 7-23) it is estimated that 86% claim to be Christians, according to the George Barna a famous author and strategist. Yet, within that generation:

- Half of the older Bridgers believe that the faith one embraces is of no consequence since all faiths teach similar lessons.
- Two-thirds of the Bridgers hold to some kind of works salvation.
- Half of them also believe that all good people go to heaven, regardless of their relationship to Jesus Christ.
- 45 percent believe that Jesus was a sinner while he was on earth.

It is no surprise then that the behavior of this generation is suffering as well. A survey done on ungodly behaviors show that the church child was only a couple of percentage points below the un-churched kids.

What the Apostles were warning the early church about is now here. It is happening now, yet some of it is happening within God's church.

What is the answer to this challenge? Obviously, God and his Son Jesus Christ is the answer to their lives. But in addition to this there needs to be a refueled hunger for the Word of God. Truth will set them free. The Church needs to be teaching truth and not get distracted on some tangent of signs and wonders. I'm not saying that signs and wonders have no place in the church. But unless there is truth, signs and wonders have no value. It should be because of the power of truth that we will see signs and wonders. We need to heed the warning of the Apostles and do all we can to bring clarity, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to what God's Word has to say.

2. Build your lives on the foundation of your holy faith. (20)

a. Build

The idea of build here is that of action, to rear up, to move towards, or to build a house. It is a developing growth that doesn't stay at one place but continues develop in knowledge and understanding. **II Peter 3:18**

But grow in the special favor and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We need to be studying and learning as much as we can. Our society makes our schedules so busy and full that often we lack adequate time for study or even just reading. We need to understand that one of the foundations of our faith is the reading, studying, meditation upon God's word. It takes time. Our growth will assure that we not get tripped up by those who will come and tell us what we want to hear.

b. *Foundation of your holy faith*

The foundation of our faith is the truth of God. It is truth that needs to be the foundation of what we believe. **Romans 10:17**

Yet faith comes from listening to this message of good news – the Good News about Christ.

*Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. **Colossians 3:16***

*“Anyone who listens to my teaching (truth) and obeys me is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rains come in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse, because it is built on rock. But anyone who hears my teaching and ignores it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against the house, it will fall with a mighty crash. **Matthew 7:24-27***

The early church understood the importance of dwelling on truth and allowing it to permeate our minds and souls. **Acts 2:42**

They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord’s Supper and in prayer.

We need to devote ourselves to learning and understanding truth. It is to be the foundation of our faith. And then as we understand the truth of God we can find freedom from stress, worry, uncertainty, fear, or whatever else may hinder us or bind us up in our life granted by God.

But with the foundation of our faith being the truth of God’s Word, there is also a catalyst that enhances its effectiveness.

3. Pray as directed by the Holy Spirit

a. *Pray*

The Word of God is one of His means of speaking to us. Pray however, is a mean of us being able to speak to God, thus it is communication between us and God. The Word of God is to be a source of strength and comfort, but prayer can also do the same. **Philippians 4:6-7**

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts, and minds as you live in Jesus Christ.

We need to think of prayer and the Word of God as the “two legs” upon which our spiritual well-being stands; both are needed in our spiritual growth.

b. Directed by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit has numerous titles such as the comforter, the counselor, yet as we look at what the Holy Spirit does we can also give him the title “the confirmer.” He confirms what God is trying to tell us, he confirms God’s truth in our lives, he confirms God’s power that is made available to us. And as the confirmer we find that He does nothing but follow God’s truth. We are called to be directed by the Holy Spirit. Look at **Galatians 5:25**.

If we are living now by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

And as we pray we are to seek God’s heart and will. The Holy Spirit will guide us knowing what that is. And even when we don’t the Holy Spirit will let us know. **I John 5:14**

And we can be confident that he will listen to us whenever we ask him for anything in line with his will.

God’s will for our lives is all based on his truth. So as we pray we must pray as we are directed by God’s truth.

4. Live in such a way that God’s love can bless you

We have a responsibility of “living in such a way.” The term “in such a way” here has the idea of preserving oneself which we looked at in Jude 1 at the beginning of this series. It means to be guarded from loss or injury. We are not to allow ourselves to be unguarded. We must be on our toes ready for whatever may come at us.

As long as we live our Christian walk based on God’s truth, on the guidance of His Holy Spirit, and take warning from the words of the Apostle’s, then we will be able to experience the love of God. **John 14:21, 23**

“Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.”

Our obedience is a mark of a relationship with God. And it is our relationship with God that will determine our eternity.

5. Wait for the mercy of God. (eternal life)

We are called to look forward to what lies ahead. In comparison to our life here on earth, what lies ahead will far exceed any temporary satisfaction we may experience. **Titus 2:11-13**

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotion to God, while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

*But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and everything in them will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be exposed to judgement. Since everything around us is going to melt away, what holy, godly lives you should be living! You should look forward to that day and hurry it along – the day when God will set the heavens on fire and the elements will melt away in flames. But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world where everyone is right with God. And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to live a pure and blameless life. And be at peace with God. **I Peter 3:10-14***

There is two ways that we can view the coming of God. It can either be in relief or in fear. Yet, the mercy of God will only be granted to those who are obedient and who know the Father. We can either see the end times as a time of God's mercy or his judgement. It is all based on our living faith.

For those who are followers of God, his mercy makes up for what we cannot earn or achieve. **Romans 6:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

*But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. He saved us,, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us because of what Jesus Christ our Savior did. He declared us not guilty because of his great kindness. And now we know that we will inherit eternal life. **Titus 3:4-7***

We need to focus on the mercy that will be shown us IF we follow through our obedience and loving relationship that is constantly being developed and sought after.

6. Be Compassionate and Careful

Jude tells us to save those who are wavering. We need to have compassion that will move us to reach out to those who need help. Jesus is a perfect example of this in **Matthew 9:36-38**

He felt great pity for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know where to go for help. They were like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, ask him to send out more workers for his fields.

Who are the workers Jesus is talking about here? We are the workers. So what have we done about it? When was the last time you reach out to someone who needs God in their lives? We are to be compassionate just as Christ was, and still is today. We are to be an active part in the church. Just sitting in the pews is not enough. We are called to respond. We must have a sense of urgency to share with others so that they don't remain lost. **II Corinthians 5:10-11**

For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies. It is because we know this solemn fear of the Lord that we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too.

People need to fear God again. The False teachers are taking the fear out of God by scoffing or ridiculing what they don't understand. The reality of God will be known one day. And the reality of his judgement will be known as well.

But while we reach out we need to be careful not to be influenced by ungodly behavior. **Galatians 6:1**

Dear friends, if a Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself.

We must allow our fear of God keep us from stepping out of line in our own lives. We need to always keep the seriousness of sin, false teaching, and ungodly behavior in front of us at all times. Sin is a serious offense.

Conclusion

We need to remember the warnings that the Apostle's have given us in regards to the future. The words that were spoken so many years ago are just as vital and relevant today as they were back in those times.

We must build ourselves up in our Christian walk, depending upon the truth of God's Word as our foundation of our faith, yet allowing the Holy Spirit to come and confirm the Scriptures. Then we will pray for things that God wants for our lives.

We are to let our love for God stir us to obey him. That our love for God would preserve us, or stop us from sinning. And as we look at his love for us we find that his mercy gives us something to look forward to. It gives us a goal to hit. That the thoughts of heaven should also encourage us to remain in our Christian walk for the long haul, focusing on prize ahead of us.

And finally, that we are to have a sense of urgency in sharing the truth of God's Word, helping other to escape the trap that cause eternal death for themselves. That we would help them develop a healthy fear of God.

As we remain faithful, we must develop, and reach out to others, and not allow circumstances, false teachings, or even personal desires to pull us off track from the eternal life awaiting us.