

Remnant Life Church

March 26, 2017

Remaining Faithful – Defending the Faith

Part 4

Jude 17-23

- **READ – Jude 17-23**

- We have focused over the last 3 weeks on the dangers of false teachers and the twisted truth they bring
 - This danger is still very real and present today
 - Recognizing the great danger and harm it brings
 - The necessity to guard against it and the many forms it takes
 - Jude uses the term ungodly 5 times in this short letter
 - The character of those Jude warns us of he presents in the examples of 3 men of the past (8-11)
 - “...the way of Cain” – selfish disobedience
 - “...greedy error of Balaam for profit” – motivated by greed
 - “...the rebellion of Korah” – self-appointed authority

- Look at verses **17, 18, and 19**
 - (17) Jude uses the teaching of the disciples to add weight to his message
 - If you don’t believe me then listen to what they said
 - Jude was not a follower of Jesus when He lived only after His resurrection
 - (18) In the last times...
 - Doesn’t that sound a little strange given that Jesus was gone less than 30 years? (Ascended around 30; Jude written in early 60’s)
 - They believed Jesus would come back for them in their lifetime
 - Some of this was based on what Jesus used as an example of how to live a righteous life with the bride waiting for the bridegroom’s return in the parable of the 10 virgins (**Matt 25**)
 - (19) Jude states again that the primary goal of those ungodly men is to bring division
 - They do not follow the spirit but the flesh
 - “natural instincts” also “worldly desires”
 - In the original language “natural instinct” is the principle of animal life or the sensuous nature that is driven by appetite and passion
 - This is what drives and motivates those who twist and pervert the truth of God

- How do we defend the faith?
 - In the verses we read this morning Jude provides 6 strategies – 3 defensive and 3 offensive – to guard and defend the truth of God’s Word

1. ***...build yourselves up in your most holy faith... (v 20a)***
 - a. To build up AND to build upon
 - b. In other words to continually build
 - c. “Yourselves” is written as both singular and plural
 - d. But as a reflexive pronoun the emphasis is placed on the individual’s personal responsibility to grow first -
 - e. But we cannot fully build our faith without one another living and acting in unity
 - f. This is why it is important to come to church, fellowship with each other, attend Bible studies, church activities, etc...
 - g. These are the things that build our faith!
 - Jude not only encourages the readers but continues to contrast the truth against the lies
 - In verse 20 he shows them that while the false teachers come to divide, the truth of God’s Word builds up the body and brings unity.

2. ***...and pray in the Holy Spirit.” (v 20b)***
 - a. Now I have read several interpretations of this that vary from praying in tongues to praying in the will of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. While I believe that the original language is more in line with the will of the Holy Spirit but the most important thing is to pray!
 - c. If you have a prayer language use it, if you do not then pray as you always do, but PRAY!
 - d. Thomas Manton (English Puritan Clergyman of the mid-17th century) –
“Prayer is not getting man’s will done in heaven it is getting God’s will done on earth”
 - e. John Piper writes, *“...to pray in the Holy Spirit is to be moved and guided by the Holy Spirit in prayer. We pray by his power and according to his direction.”*
 - What is the second contrast that Jude is making regarding the Holy Spirit?
 - The deceivers claim false authority through “dreams” or words that no one can prove or disprove
 - The Holy Spirit will never, repeat NEVER, lead anyone to do anything that is contrary to the Word of God

3. ***Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (v 21)***
 - a. The meaning of the first part of this sentence is important to understand
 - i. “Keep yourselves” does not mean “work for” – in other words things I do implying that Jude is telling the people that their efforts keep them in God’s love
 - ii. But it is to “work out” – doing only by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in us

- iii. There is also an urgency in what Jude is saying because of the consequence of allowing the deceivers to continue unabated
- Jude's third contrast
 - We wait on God through His mercy to come to eternal life
 - Deceptive teaching will make it about you and what you do
- But we do not sit in our fortresses of protection with the drawbridge pulled up tight
 - Jude then presents three actions for three different groups of people
 - While we are on guard we are also called to minister to those in need, those who are deceived

4. **Show compassion to those in doubt (v 22)**

- a. The word "compassion" used in our translations is merciful, kind, pity, even to convince
- b. Doubt should never be a reason to give up on someone
- c. This first group are those people who believe in and know the truth but they are not grounded
 - i. As Remnant Life continues to grow there will be all levels of knowledge, understanding, and maturity in the people who attend
 - ii. We are called to be merciful and kind to everyone
 - iii. Nor in spiritual pride
 - iv. What is required is love and patience
 - 1. **II Tim 4:2** - ...*be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.*
 - 2. Jesus loved and corrected His disciples with compassion and always with a heart to build never tear down

5. **Snatch others from the fire and save them (v 23a)**

- a. This second group is being led astray, perhaps even immersed in the false teaching, but there is hope
- b. They can be snatched away from the fire of the lost and be saved
- c. What is the fire?
 - i. Virtually every interpretation agrees it is the literal fire of hell
 - ii. To follow false teaching, or apostacy, is to spend eternity in everlasting torment
- d. The word "save" in the original Greek is sozo and means to rescue from eminent danger
 - i. We should never minimize the danger of false teaching or twisted spiritual truth
 - ii. Jesus said to His disciples, *Be on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy* – **Luke 12:1**

iii. False truth is not only the words being twisted but, as demonstrated by the Pharisees, it is a life being lived in contrast to God's Word

6. **...to others show mercy, mixed with fear (v 23b)**

- a. When showing mercy, use caution because sin is contagious
- b. This third group are also those who know the truth but they are being led astray
 - i. Those who are in danger of being lost must be rescued but with care
 - ii. The deceit of sin can draw others in - even those who mean to save them
 - iii. The word "fear" is phobos – meaning a healthy respect for something that is life-threatening (me -electricity)
- c. A pathologist who had a subspecialty in medical microbiology (infectious disease) after reading the 23rd verse said it immediately reminded him of the Ebola Virus outbreak of 2004 in West Africa – many of those who came to save the infected were themselves infected and died
- d. Jude goes on to say that we don't stop there...
- e. **Hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh (v 23c)**
 - i. Jude was painting a grotesque picture that would cause intense aversion in the reader
 1. In that day clothes stained by a physical discharge of the body was cause to put them out of the city
 - ii. This is how we must view sin
 - iii. There are some who have speculated this is also why Jesus left His grave clothes behind at the resurrection
 1. The resurrected and perfect Jesus could not wear the clothes stained with the sin He had died to take away
 2. OT parallel we see is where the high priest had remove and wash his linen garments after performing the sin offerings for himself and the people on the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16**)
- f. BUT – always remembering to hate the sin, not the sinner

- We are called to be on guard
 - Guard our hearts
 - Guard our homes
 - Guard our church
- Guard does not mean keep out
 - We will always err of the side of mercy and acceptance
 - But protecting one another in the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit is what preserves the life we have been given and protects it from the lies and deceit of the enemy.