Mirrors of Mercy — Delivery Transcript

Jude 1:22–23 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, September 14, 2025 · *The Contender*

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Anyway, I was standing in front of the mirror and I and I saw some things I didn't used to see before. There was some some extra pounds that you used to I could hide the midsection by just sucking in. I can't do that anymore. It just there's just no hiding it. There's some there's some gray hair that used to not be there. The skin isn't quite as radiant, never was really radiant, but just you know it looks a little worn and torn. And I got to thinking about mirrors and the couple days ago when we were at the fair.

You know at the fair they have those fun house mirrors that make you look like you got a fat head or skinny body and it's and it's pretty interesting. But a good mirror reflects exactly what stands in front of it. If it's a transparent piece of glass and it's a shiny piece of metal, whether aluminum or silver, whatever they use. A good mirror that's not contorted or bent is going to reflect accurately that which stands before it. And I would say there is a spiritual lesson in that, in that that which you stand before, if your heart is a mirror.

You are going to reflect back to those who look at you. You will be a reflection of what you stand before. And there is a lot of brokenness in our culture. There's a lot of anger and resentment. And polarization and all sorts of things. And at the end of the day, the source or reason for a lot of that being reflected out into the world is because the hearts of many people sit before those kinds of things on a pretty regular basis. Take in rage, you reflect rage. If you take in polarization, you'll reflect polarization.

You take in love, you'll reflect love. And this morning, as we look into the book of Jude, one of Jude's exhortations for how to contend for the faith. Is that we would be a reflection not of our culture but of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in reflecting our Lord Jesus Christ, we would present to the culture something better, something superior. Because of all the things that that happened this last week, thinking about our culture and what's going on in our culture there's there certainly is some kind of a soul sickness, and one of the antidotes to that I think is for God's people to stand before an alternative to what is being reflected and presented to our culture today.

And that alternative, of course, is the kingdom of God and the king of that kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ. There's a theory of politics called the horseshoe theory, which basically says there is a difference between the left wing and the right wing. But the closer people get to the extremes of either left or right, they actually begin to get closer to each other and even begin to reflect each other. Not in what they think is the solution to their politics or what is right or what is wrong, but rather the mechanisms for how to carry that politic out in the world.

In other words, whether it's a communist government or a fascist government, they are agreed upon centralization of power and the silencing of dissent. And centralization of resources and so on and so forth. And it's usually in the middle where there is a greater spread of differences between those two things. Now my point in saying that is not to argue for left or right or even a middle-of-the-ground politics. But to say that we reflect what we stand before. And if we're going to be a counterculture, the thing that we need to stand before is not the ideologies, whether they're left wing or right wing, though you should have a political point of view, but to stand before the source of the kingdom that is to the to come, the kingdom to which we belong.

Which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jude is essentially saying that to a group of converted Jews who were raised culturally Jewish. Had converted to Christianity and that they believed Jesus was the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament. And they were, I think, pretty young in their faith because they were second generation Christians. The apostles had preached the message. It had spread around the world. But by this time many of the apostles had been martyred, put in prison, exiled, and the original energy behind that early Christian movement was certainly beginning to wane, at least in Jerusalem proper, because of the persecution and just violence that was being enacted on Christians and Jews by the Roman Empire.

And so instead of standing before the biblical Christ and the biblical gospel, there were groups of people even in their own church family, who were presenting a counterfeit vision of Christ, a counterfeit kingdom, a counterfeit gospel. And as people began to stand before that gospel, they began to reflect it. And Jude writes essentially to say, these people who are doing this are not good. For your church family. They are leading people astray. They are denying Jesus Christ. They may even confess to be Christians. We don't know that for sure. But through their actions and their theology, they're denying the biblical Christ and they're leading people astray.

So he tells these young believers you need to stand before something different. And he tells the true Christians, you need to contend for the true faith that was delivered to you by the apostles once and for all. It is fixed, it is final, it is unchanging, and these people playing on the edges and twisting it and perverting it are doing true damage to what Christians are all about. Now I would say the book of Jude is A 70%, 30% breakdown in that Jude spends 70% of the letter exposing this threat, who these people are and what they're all about.

And the remaining 30%, giving Christians a positive vision, not just to contend for the faith, but how to contend for the faith. And it's that final 30% that we're going to deal with this morning. And so if you'll turn to Jude, I'm going to actually begin in verse 2, which is a prayer. For the true Christians there in Jude's original audience. He calls them those who are the called, loved by God the Father, kept for Jesus Christ, and then he prays in verse 2. For mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied.

The Greek word means to be lavished, lavishly poured out. In your congregation. Mercy, peace, and love. Why? Well, dear friends, verse three Although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was delivered. To the saints once for all. Why did they have to contend, verse four? Because some people, that's his

designation for these false teachers, these people who were designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth. In other words, they were professing something so that they didn't look bad, but underneath the surface they were indeed bad.

They are ungodly. They turn or twist the grace of our God into sensuality, and then they deny Jesus Christ, who is our only Master and Lord. There's lots of disagreement on who these people are. Some say they're a political sect like the zealots who were preaching a political gospel of violence against the Roman Empire. Some say they were Gnostic false teachers and that they were advocating for sexual immorality and you can do whatever you want with your body because the only thing that matters is the spirit. We can't really know for sure, but whoever they were, they didn't necessarily look bad at the beginning.

They had established themselves in the congregation. They had gained influence and in some kind of power and position, and they were twisting the grace of God, perverting it into a license for sin, and denying that Jesus was king and in the Christ. He continues to expose them from verses 5 all the way down to verse 16. He says they are like those Old Testament rebels who experienced God's judgment on rebellion in the Old Testament. He takes from the old and applies it to the new, not once, not twice, but three different times.

He culminates in verse 19 that these people are they create divisions. They're worldly. They don't have the spirit. But then in verse 17, he returns back to his focus on the true Christians and he says, but you, dear friends, remember. Say I want you to contend. Here's who you're contending against. Now that we've established who the enemy or the opposition is Here's how you contend. Number one, remember what was predicted by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They told you in the end time there'll be scoffers according to their own ungodly desires.

And then verse 20, you dear friends, as you build yourself up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. For eternal life. Now we've already studied both of these passages, and essentially what Jude is saying is if you're going to be a contender number one, you need to remember God's warning given through his apostles. Jesus had those original twelve. He taught them about the kingdom. They received the true gospel, and they told you days like this would come.

Yes, he said he was going to return, but before he returned, he talked about how the love of many would grow cold and how there would be a falling away and people would amass for themselves. False teachers to tingle their itching ears. Remember the source of truth. Remember what the apostles had warned. And then secondly, live out the truth that they preached. Namely by remaining in the love of God. Which is interesting. What Jude says is the best way to contend. It's not debates or arguments or Physical violence or anything like that.

It is remembering the source of truth and living that truth out as you remain in God's love for you. And he ends that by saying the way to way to remain is to build yourself up in the faith, to pray in the Holy Spirit, and then to wait for the mercy of Jesus that is to be revealed. Which is interesting because he

prayed for mercy, peace, and love to be multiplied in their congregation. Now he's reminding them that on that day of judgment they will receive mercy, not just from God the Father in prayer, but from the Lord Jesus Christ in judgment.

And then his third and final application for how to contend in verse 22 is that they would have mercy on those who waver. You're going to get mercy from the Father who lavishly pours it out as I pray. You're going to receive mercy from Jesus on the day of judgment. So therefore, verse 22, have mercy on those who waver, save others by snatching them from the fire, and have mercy on others, but with fear, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. And so four times Jude uses this word mercy two times in our text, once in verse 2, once in verse 21.

And the basic idea is that as you receive mercy from God the Father through Jesus Christ, what you have received from God I want you to dispense or give out to others. In your notes, we need to reflect a life of mercy. God's people are called to remember the truth, to remain in God's love, and reflect God's mercy to other people. Now it raises a lot of questions. Number one, what is mercy? What does you mean by the word mercy? To whom are we to give mercy? You've got these three types of people, those who doubt, those who are caught up in a fire, and those who are defiled who are those people?

And then what does mercy look like? If this is what mercy is and this is to whom it's given, what should it look like as we give it to those kind of people in those kind of situations? These are all questions. Raised by our text that I want us to answer today. But the bottom line is that Jude, for his top three of how to contend for the faith in a culture of chaos and brokenness and violence and persecution is that you remember the truth, that you remain in God's love, and that you reflect the mercy of God.

To other people, which I think is fascinating. He doesn't default to arguments. Arguments are important. He doesn't default to preaching. I think preaching is important. But he defaults to living out the truth of the gospel, namely in the domain of God's mercy for people. Now why is that? Well, I think to answer the question of why, we need to answer the question of what? What is mercy? If you do a study on mercy. I've always heard mercy is not getting what you deserve, and grace is getting what you don't deserve.

Has anybody ever heard that definition before? Pretty good definition. But mercy I would argue is much more nuanced and fuller in terms of its essence. If you go all the way back to the Old Testament, which Jude would have been very steeped in as the half-brother of Jesus, he would have been familiar of the passage in the book of Exodus where the Lord Yahweh reveals his covenant name to Moses, and when the Lord reveals his covenant name to Moses, the very first attribute He assigns to himself as this relational covenant-keeping God is that he is a God of mercy.

Exodus chapter 34, verse 6. The Lord proclaimed, I'm the Lord Yahweh. He is a compassionate and gracious God. That word translated compassionate is the Hebrew word for mercy. So God is merciful in his very essence as a relational God. The very essence of his relational dynamic with a sinful broken people is that he is characterized by mercy. You see the same word, not in Hebrew, but in

Greek, applied to Jesus, God the Son, that as he looked at the crowds, he had compassion or mercy on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

In Luke chapter 30 or Deuteronomy, again in the Old Testament, God is characterized by mercy. Because he's a covenant-keeping God. So when you think about God being a God of relationship, the defining characteristic is his mercy. When you look in the New Testament, Jesus in relationship with people was characterized by mercy and then Jesus also in teaching his disciples for how to have relationships with one another is that they should be characterized. Those relationships should be characterized by mercy, even in the Beatitudes. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

And then he tells not just his disciples, but the Pharisees and the watching world. What God is really about is not sacrifice and ritual and all the things that we sometimes get distracted and He is about mercy. Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice because I didn't come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. And so if you take now there's so many more that we could look at, but if you go through the scripture and you ask the question, what is mercy really? I would say mercy is fundamentally relational.

The essence of mercy is that which exists between two people. And the essence of mercy is it is that that thing that enables two people to maintain relationship even when one or the other lets the other down or when one or the other Violates the terms of the covenant, when one or the other rubs you the wrong way or does something to disappoint you. When that happens, mercy is that thing. That enables you to overcome it, to get past it, to say, hey, it's okay, we're still going to be together on this.

That is mercy. So in a way, yes, it is not getting what you deserve. It's why it's always wrapped up with forgiveness and letting something go or not holding someone accountable for the debt that they owe you, but it's also so much bigger than that in that mercy includes the whole suite of emotions and activities and dispositions. That enable God to keep relationship with sinful broken people, enable Jesus to desire relationship with people who probably didn't want him. And that enables you and me to maintain relationships with each other when we do all manner of disappointing behavior and annoying and aggravating behavior that would make you want to say, I don't want to be with you anymore.

That's mercy. And I would say in that way, mercy is like engine oil. Has anyone ever done anything with engine oil? Changed your oil? What does oil do? Oil creates a slick, smooth surface between two metallic surfaces so that they can cooperate together. The essence of oil is to absorb the friction. Between two solid pieces of metal. Oil absorbs the heat that gets created when two pieces of metal you know, clash. Just like mercy absorbs the heat in a relationship when people are rubbing each other the wrong way. Mercy is like oil in that it removes, it suspends the impurities that come to the surface in a relationship and it s carries them along into that oil filter so that the oil filter filter catches those shades of metal and enables the oil to continue to flow so that the gears can continue to wind.

That's what mercy does in our relationships. Mercy is used in marriages, mercy is used in parenting, mercy is used in the local church, is used in your Sunday school, small group class. We might as well just rename it the Sunday school, goodness gracious. And mercy is used in all of those ways to enable relationships to endure. Just like oil is needed so that your engine can endure, mercy is needed so your relationships can endure. And that, according to Jude, is the most important thing. If you're going to contend for the faith, you need to be merciful.

You need to show mercy. If that's what mercy is, if that is what mercy is, then why is it so matter? Why does it matter so much? I think the answer to that question is because our giving one another mercy is the greatest and most compelling evidence that a God of mercy exists and that his invitation to receive mercy is legitimate. In other words, our gospel, the Christian gospel, is that there is a God in heaven who created you, but you have sinned against him. He is a perfect and holy God.

And even though he has the right to destroy you to judge you eternally in hell. This God is a loving God. He is a loving heavenly Father who desires relationship with you. And even though you have failed him in your sin and rebellion, his great love for you, he extends mercy, kindness, forgiveness, patience, reconciliation that is not deserved. That that you can receive by grace if you will just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you will believe that He sacrificed himself on your behalf for your sin. So that when you repent of your sin and you put your faith in Jesus, God's mercy covers your sin and saves your soul.

That gospel is a profound, radical claim that not only does God exist, but that unlike all the other religions in the world, He's not a God that desires you to prove yourself and to earn your way. But he's a God who desires to save you, though you can't save yourself through an act of mercy. How would we defend the truth of that gospel? Well you can defend it. Historically through the evidence for the resurrection, you can defend it on grounds of biblical prophecy and all of those things, or you can defend it by you yourself having been transformed by that gospel, extending mercy to other people that don't deserve it.

And demonstrating that even though you would never naturally be able to love and forgive in that way, because of the supernatural Spirit of God living within you, and the supernatural power of the gospel that you believe. Creating an oil within your heart that smooths over those transgressions and disappointments so that you extend mercy over and over and over again. And when lost people come into a community characterized by mercy, it reveals the glory of God, the God we say exists, and it defends or establishes the truth of the gospel that we're preaching.

And I think that's why Jude says that's what you do. That's the most important thing. Be merciful. Show mercy. Absorb the heat. Take the blow. Reduce the friction. Keep the relationships going. Don't give up. Forgive. Seventy times seven, forgive. Keep on keeping on. Because in doing so, not only are you doing what God says to do, but you're demonstrating to a lost and dying world. This God exists and he desires relationship with you. And here is a community of people in which you can discover that God and grow in him.

That's why mercy is number one. It reveals the glory of God and the truth of our gospel. The other reason I think mercy is number one is the fact that mercy can renew our faith in the time of crisis. And this gets at why Jude assigns mercy to three different types of people. In three different kinds of situations. If you read the passage again, I kind of separated them out. Number one, have mercy on those who waver. Number two, save others, which I think is another way of saying have mercy.

But have mercy on the people who are in the fire. Snatch them from the fire. And then the third is to have mercy on those who are defiled. Even as you hate the garment defiled by the flesh, you receive the person who's been entrapped or entrenched in sin. So three different types of people. Are they all Christians? I'm not really sure. I'm going to preach it as though these are all types of believers. They may be unbelievers. They may be, as in Jude's case believers who profess faith but may not actually possess salvation, and are kind of in that proving their faith that it is sincere and genuine.

Not that they lose their salvation, but that they demonstrate the pure the sincerity of their faith through through perseverance. So that's what I want us to do with the remaining time. What does mercy look like when it's applied to these three people? It looks different, but the impact of mercy for all three is that it keeps them believing. It renews their faith. It preserves their belonging in the community of believers so that they can persevere and endure to the very end until the day of judgment. And I can testify in my own heart, my own life, how God's mercy given to me through another Christian was used by God in a special way to renew my faith.

To renew my conviction that that there really is a God, because that person would never normally act that way. So let's break them down. These three people in your notes are the wavering, the worldly, and the wretched. The wavering, the worldly, and the wretched. When it comes to the wavering, mercy demonstrates reassurance. Mercy reassures those who are wavering. Now we've already gone past the text but that word translated waver a lot of translations use the word doubt the king James Version and the New King James Version use the word distinction.

They m I think the king James says, show mercy that makes a difference. Not that mercy's so strong and great that it makes the difference, but that You show mercy in a way that the person who's trying to distinguish between two ideas can distinguish one from the other with certainty. That's what when you doubt, you're trying to distinguish which one's right. Is it letter A or is it letter B? And when you make a difference, you relieve yourself of that doubt and you choose. And he's saying, I want you to show mercy to those people who are doubting such that they can land where they need to land.

I call these people the fence sitters. That's why you got a guy sitting on a fence. These people are not apostates, they don't hate God. They are stuck on the fence. They are torn between loyalty to Jesus and pressure in their culture, pressure from Rome. And they're they're really struggling. Can I really trust the Lord? Is Jesus really who he said he is? I want to believe, but I just have these doubts. I have these struggles, and he's saying you need to show mercy to those people. Now those people exist in our church today.

There's all kinds of churches filled with all kinds of doubters. Even my own testimony in college during seminary training to become a preacher, struggling with doubt. And being very anxious in that season because I thought if I'm not a Christian, if I don't believe this stuff I am basically wasting a lot of time and a lot of other people's money because you guys were supplying my education. What I did not need in that time was shame or rebuke or how could you, how dare you? I needed reasons to believe. I needed relationships with people who would take serious my doubts and struggles and say there's a reason for them.

And not just to give me answers to my questions, but to poke holes in my doubt. Well you're questioning this from a certain framework, and maybe that framework isn't so sound. And had it not been for authors like William Lane Craig and Peter Creft and Blaise Pascal, after whom I named my firstborn son. I don't know that what would have happened I think would have looked different than what did happen because of the presence of mercy by the people of God to walk with me in those seasons. And I think that's what young people need today too, because there's so many doubts.

Is the Bible true? Did Jesus really rise? Why doesn't God affirm my LGBTQ brother or cousin or friend? Does faith. Can faith coexist with science? I mean there's just intellectual doubts, there's moral doubts, there's emotional doubts, there's theological doubts. Am I really saved? Can I be sure of my salvation? People struggle with these questions, and the church needs to be a place where those people can verbalize those doubts without being shamed, destroyed, or afraid. There needs to be room for disagreement and questioning. And even as we make room for disagreement and questioning, we don't make room for distance in our relationships or isolation.

And one of my deep prayers ever since I recovered through that season of doubt and came out very strong on the other side. Very convinced that not only is the scripture true but that Christianity and the Lord Jesus Christ is the hope of the world was what I forgot where I was going with that. Forty years old, people, there it is. What was needed in that time was people who would not shrink back in relationship. From me but would remain steadfast. And so what do you do to reassure the doubting?

You reason with them. That's what you do. You reason with those who struggle and doubt. Give them answers to their questions. Acknowledge the pressure. Hey, I know you live in a culture full of lies. I know you're getting bombarded by the media and your professors and they're saying this and this and this. I see it. I recognize it. I would. Have doubts too, if I were you. Don't make them feel like they're unchristian or don't love Jesus or, you know, weird. Acknowledge the sources of their doubt and answer the questions that they have.

Number two, the worldly. The worldly, verse 23. Are those who need to be snatched from the fire? I use the word worldly because that's the same word Jude uses in verse 19 in talking about the apostates. He says that they are worldly. Today we would call them carnal Christians or backslidden Christians. These are Christians who are not just doubting, but they've actually begun to sin and to violate God's faith. God's design for whatever it is, sexuality, theology, finances, morality. They are they are in the world, okay? They are backslidden. And what does mercy look like for a backslidden Christian?

Jude says you've got to snatch them from the fire. Now, a lot of people assign this category to non-Christians, and they equate the fire with the fire of hell. These c these are non-believers going to burn up in hell. And that may be true, and I think you can apply it in that way. But if you ask the question, what does Jude mean by fire? He's already talked about fire in verse 7, and he applied it to the eternal fire of God's judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, which I would say a lot of people in Sodom are not in heaven.

You know, they're probably burning in God's eternal fire of judgment. But there was one person in Sodom and Gomorrah who got snatched from the fire. Do you remember who that was it was lot. He got snatched from the fire by the angels that were there. He didn't want to go. He hesitated, but they grabbed him by the wrist and said, we're going to deliver you from this. Worldly spirit that you have developed by living in Sodom for umpteen years. You are blind, you are hesitating, you are morally compromised, but because I love you and I want to save you.

I'm snatching you out of these flames, and I'm going to bring you outside the city. That's who I think that's who Jude has in mind. So in that way, maybe they're not a Christian, maybe they are a Christian, but they're like lot In that they knew better, but they're they're backslitten. They're living in Sodom. The other reason I think that is because the Old Testament prophets use this language. Of being snatched by the fire in a couple of other places. One is in the book of Amos. This was pre-exile, before the Babylonian captivity.

And in Amos chapter 4 God is speaking to Israel, and he said, I overthrew some of you like I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a burning stick snatched from the fire, and yet even then you didn't return to me. So I delivered you, and you're still presuming upon my grace. You're still living as if it's no problem to continue in sin. And then of course God judges them with the Babylonian captivity. After the Babylonian captivity, or on the tail end of it, there's another prophet named Zechariah who uses the same imagery, and this is what I think Jude has in his mind.

It is Joshua, the high priest, as a representative. Believing remnant there in Israel and he says no the high priest Joshua is standing there and Satan is standing next to him and he's bringing accusation against Joshua because of his sin. And the angel of the Lord, with Satan standing there, says to the Lord, I think this is God the Son, speaking to God the Father, May the Lord rebuke you, Satan. May the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you. Isn't this man a burning stick snatched from the fire? Now that's not an unbeliever.

That is a believing remnant. That in the Babylonian captivity had become morally compromised and dirty. We're going to see later Joshua was wearing filthy robes. But God says, I have chosen these people, I have preserved these people. They may be morally defiled, but they have hearts of faith, and therefore you will not accuse them. They may be guilty, but they are mine, and I have forgiven them, and I have changed their clothes from dirty clothes to festive robes. That's what I think Jude has in mind. So what do you do with someone that's in the fire?

You risk getting them out of the fire. You snatch them from the fire. What's that going to mean? It means you may get burned. It means it may get hot. It means they may say to you, how dare you? Who are you to judge me? Who are you to say? You got no business telling me how to live my life. They may they may hurt your feelings, they may raise the temperature in your relationships, but if you love that person and you're a Christian And they're a believer, at least a professing believer, you make it your business to get in their life and say, this is burning you.

This you are entrapped, you are enslaved, this is doing damage to your heart. Get out of there Stop it. Why would you live this way? This is what every mother or father wants to do for their prodigal son or daughter. This is what every loving friend would do for another Christian brother or sister that is playing in the world. And this is what Judah's saying you need to do. There are some people who are not just doubting, but they've started playing in the mud. They've started playing next to the fire, and you better go over there and grab them and pull them out of that fire.

And it will be risky, but mercy will take a risk. Mercy will risk getting singed. It will risk getting burned because of the love that you have for the person stuck in sin. So that's what mercy looks like for the doubter. That's what mercy looks like for the worldly. And then lastly You have mercy for the wretched, verse 23. Have mercy on others, but with fear, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. Now again, I think this has Old Testament roots. I call 'em wretched because that's the best word I can come up with when I think of something kind of rank and stinky.

The word for garment there is the word for underwear. That's why I've got a nice pair of briefs up on the up on the screen. That's what men would wear under their tunics in the first century. I'm not sure that they were, you know, wide tidies like that. They're probably a little longer, but the point is You know, when you're doing laundry, at least when I'm doing laundry, I'm not just grabbing those things. I'm like, you know, woo. I don't care who they can be my underwear. That's how I'm going to treat them.

That's the it's wretched. It's gross. These are not just doubters, these are not just people hanging over the flames of fire. These are people who are entrenched in sin. They are defensive. They are self-righteous and they are contaminating Everyone else in the church as a result of their immorality. And Judah's saying, you need to show mercy to those people, but the mercy you extend to them needs to be different. It doesn't look like the person in the fire, and it certainly doesn't look like the person doubting. You need to show reservation.

You need to be practicing restraint. And again, the reason I think this is because of the Old Testament roots that Jude, I would assume, is Pulling from that same passage we read in Zechariah 3. If you keep reading in verses 3 and 4, he talks about Joshua wearing filthy clothes. And Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes and he stood before the angel, and the angel of the Lord spoke to those standing before him and said, take off those filthy clothes. I'm going to put clean clothes on him. This ritual purity laws was also talked about in the book of Leviticus.

In Leviticus 13, it talks about those who have leprosy. And a little later in Leviticus 13, those who have leprosy have purity laws for what to do with their fabric. Reading this is where I came up with a, you know, I never knew this before. What's the difference between a warp and a weft? The difference between a warp and a weft is what direction it goes in the fabric. He says in Leviticus 13, if a fabric is contaminated, let me just pull it up here so I'm not looking. If fabric is contaminated with mildew in wool or linen fabric, and if it's in the warp or the weft of the linen or the wool, in other words, the horizontal threads or the vertical threads, or if it's in leather or anything made of leather, and if the contamination is red or green in the fabric, the leather, the warp, or the weft, or any leather article, it is a mildew contamination.

It is bad news. It doesn't matter how small it is, and it doesn't matter where it is, it's bad. And it should be shown to the priest. And what's the priest got to do? The priest has to examine the contamination and quarantine it. In other words, restrict access to the community for seven days. The priest is to re-examine the contamination on the seventh day, and if it is spread in the fabric, the warp of the weft of the leather, regardless of how it's used, the contamination is harmful. It is unclean, and he is to burn the fabric, the warp of the wef, the wool of the linen, any leather article which is contaminated, since it is harmful mildew.

It must be burned. Now this is, I think, very applicable in the context of a local church. There will sometimes be Christians. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't, but they profess faith and they are entrenched in sin. And if you continue to allow them access to the believing remnant, that sin will spread just like mildew and leprosy spread in these unclean fabrics. And so it is incumbent upon a leader or another Christian To restrain the sin even as you receive the person. We say do they love the sin or hate the sin?

And that's what Judah is saying here. And it is messy, it is nuanced, it is difficult. I'm not saying it's easy. I think about this when I think about David Earl's leading students You know, some of those students were like me when I was a teenager. I was confessing Christ and I was living for the world. I was wretched. And I did not need to have the same level of influence and access with the rest of my church family, 16 to 18. That I used to have because I would have influenced them negatively.

And so it's incumbent upon people in ministry to say, I love you, I don't judge you, I don't hate you are welcome here, but that isn't welcome here. This can't come. This has to be restrained. And it's because of your mercy that you do those things. And so you receive the wretched. You love the sinner, but you hate the sin. So we're running out of time, so let's as we close, think about what this looks like in our local church. And I want you again to think of that image of engine oil.

I didn't know this, I did a little study on engine oil just out of intrigue. The way that engine oil works, if you'll go to that next slide, this is from an old Chevrolet video. And essentially engine oil enables those two metal surfaces to work with each other. By erecting a liquid film of oil that gets sacrificed as the gears turn. In other words, the metals themselves cannot produce the mercy that's necessary for those relationships to continue. The oil of mercy has to come from outside. And I think it's a beautiful picture of the gospel.

Jesus is that sacrificial death that enables you and I, as we stand before Jesus and allow his love for us to create within us the oil of mercy. It is because of his sacrifice for us and in his forgiveness of us that we are able to forgive one another and extend mercy upon mercy. And so I'll ask you this morning, if you were a life in need of redemption. And the oil of God's mercy restored you and renewed you and gave you a hope and a future. As you stand before that Christ on that cross, would you allow that to create within you a fresh mercy?

For the people to your left and to your right this morning, whether inside the church or outside the church, would we be people of mercy? Could you imagine the impact? A congregation could have if the people in that congregation were vessels of mercy first and foremost. And so as we bow our heads together and enter into this time of response, would you ask our the Lord to create that heart within you to create that heart within our leadership, to give them wisdom and discernment to know what it looks like in these various different stages.

And would you this morning receive the mercy of God for yourself, which has been made available to you through the Lord Jesus Christ, through his life, his death, and his resurrection? And if you've lived your entire life hoping for the best because you tried hard and you hope it's enough, I'm here to tell you this morning that's not the way to heaven, that is not how salvation comes. We're saved by grace through faith because we stand before a God of mercy who desires relationship with us, offers forgiveness to us. But on his terms, which are terms of mercy and grace, if you will repent and believe.

And so Father, as we bow our heads and close our eyes, would you, Holy Spirit, speak to us in this moment. Give us wisdom to know the mercy we need to receive and in light of what we have received, what mercy should look like to the people that you've put in our life. Right here at Broadview Baptist church and in our families, in our workplaces, in our homes, and everywhere else, would you make us salt and light in a world of brokenness and anger and division? Would you make us people who stand before Jesus and reflect the mercy of God to a world that is in desperate need of that redemption and grace?

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. And God's people said, Amen.