

Jude: Defend the Faith

Application

Jude 1:20-23

June 11, 2023

HDBC

Jesus established the church as the primary institution through whom He would work. Churches are groups of believers who have joined together to meet regularly for worship, to encourage one another in the face of persecution and trials, to promote spiritual growth and maturity, to take the gospel to their communities and around the world, and to glorify God until Jesus comes. It was true then and it is true now.

Early on in the life of the church, Satan devised strategies to weaken the effectiveness of the church. Division, immorality, idolatry, pride, selfishness, and misplaced priorities are some of the tools he has used. One of the most effective has been false teaching. He knew that if he could get people to believe the wrong things they would trust the wrong things and do the wrong things.

Jude, a half-brother of Jesus and leader in the early church recognized the great danger of false teachers. He wrote only one letter that is part of the New Testament and its purpose was to warn against this danger. For most of the letter he has described them and warned against them. Now, toward the end he offers some ***application***.

Jude is not all negative. Nor is he advocating that we focus all our attention on suppressing false theology. We are also to focus on our spiritual maturity and focus on the important work of evangelism.

1. Personal Focus (20-21) (Four phrases)

A. Building yourselves up

Jude speaks of the Christian life as a building or a city that needs to be built or expanded. This suggests growth. With salvation comes new birth and with new birth the expectation of growing toward maturity. This means will not stay the same. We will know more about Jesus. We will have greater faith in Jesus. We will have a greater understanding of who God is, what He wants to do in us, and more.

Daniel Burnham is a famous architect in the history of Chicago. He once declared, ***Make no small plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood.*** Chicago owes its claim of being the architectural capital of the world to him. He refused to stop dreaming and building.

This is what Jude has in mind. We need to think about our own spiritual growth and to build our faith well. It is what Paul had in mind in Philippians 2:12. ***Work out your salvation.***

Suggests personal responsibility. *Build yourselves up.* We would not deny the work of God in our lives, but we also must not forget our responsibility. How do we do it? I'll mention four key ways.

1) Read the Bible

And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up. Acts 20:32

Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation. 1 Peter 2:2

2) See the value in trials

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

Muscles are strengthened through adversity. Lifting weights.

3) Learn from other believers

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Prv. 27:17

Be intentional about interacting with other believers. Be intentional about talking about spiritual things. Be intentional about serving together, praying together, worshipping together.

4) Act in faith

Do things that require faith. Step out in faith. Try a ministry that

stretches you. We mature when we step out in faith.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted, and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Col. 2:6-7

B. Praying in the Holy Spirit

Prayer is such an important thing. All of us pray. Jude calls us to pray better, by praying ***in the Spirit***. What does it mean?

1. Being led by the Holy Spirit as we pray.

We are yielding to his will and his desires. We are to be so saturated by the Holy Spirit that we are praying as He would pray.

2. Praying in the will of God, which is consistent with the Spirit.

Content of our praying is not contradictory to God's will. We learn them by studying the word and listening to His voice. **Not praying for God to bless an adulterous relationship or sinful business deal.**

3. Praying, even when you cannot find words. Yielding to Him.

The Spirit prays for us with groanings too deep for words. Have you ever been in prayer before God, but the words could not be formed. In such agony of soul. That is praying in the Spirit.

C. Keep yourselves in the love of God

Same word used in verse one, where Jude says we are **kept** for Jesus Christ. There, we were kept by another. Here, we do the keeping. This does not mean I have to live a certain kind of life in order to keep God loving me. His love will never cease.

Picture a **constantly falling waterfall**. You are standing under it. The water is cascading over and on you. You only experience it as you are standing ***in it***. So, what does this mean? John 15 sheds some light.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

You stay in His love when you obey His commandments. It all comes down to a matter of obedience.

D. Waiting for the life to come

Reference to the return of the Lord. We are already recipients of His mercy, but when He comes again, we will feel the **full joy of His presence** and the **full expression of his mercy**. Greater, fuller understanding of His mercy in that day. Refers to the **one who strains to see someone whom they expect to come**.

2. Outward Focus (22-23)

We not only have a responsibility for our own spiritual growth, but we have responsibility for others around us. It is not about you! I love **the title of the book written by Gayle Sayers many years ago, *I Am Third***. God first, others second, myself third. Even as we focus on our spiritual development, we also focus on those who need Jesus. Three groups.

A. Doubters

People who have grown up in church and have **come to doubt their relationship** with the Lord. Could also include people outside the church who are **sincerely seeking the truth but have legitimate doubts** concerning Christianity. We must be merciful, compassionate, and loving. We must listen to their words and their hearts. We must affirm any hurt or confusion they share.

We must be ready to answer their questions. We must stick with them. Finally, we must NEVER put them on the clock. Give them as much time as they need. Remember, God is the one who is doing the work. We are simply being available tools in His hand.

B. Desperate

Close to Hell. **Close to death or approaching the point where they will totally reject the truth**. With these we need to be bolder and more aggressive. No time for cultivating and waiting. Must make sure they understand the magnitude of the situation. With some, the greatest need is to be direct and clear.

We must have a conviction that Hell is real, life is short, & judgment is coming. I'm reminded of C. T. Studd. He lived from 1860-1931. Came from a wealthy family. Educated at Cambridge and was one of the top cricket players of his day. In time he became a Christian and determined to spend his life trying to rescue souls from hell.

He gave away a fortune and became part of the famous Cambridge Seven. University students who walked away from fortune, fame, and the comforts of England to go to the hard places of the world as missionaries. Studd died in distant Africa. He once said, ***some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.***

C. Dangerous

People who are lost and living immoral or ungodly lifestyles. **With** fear, because of their power to influence others, even you. Be careful around them. Have a healthy fear of the power of temptation and sin. Like a doctor treating a person with a highly contagious disease.

Regardless of the risk, we must focus more on reaching others with the Gospel. I can do better. I can do more. I'm sure you can, as well.

I'm reminded of a conversation at the end of the movie ***Schindler's List***. Schindler was a wealthy businessman who used his influence and wealth to save Jews from the Nazis. In the scene the war is over. Schindler is preparing to leave in his car. He stops to talk with his Jewish foreman at the plant who wants to somehow thank him for all he did during the wars.

Foreman: *One who saves one life saves the world in time.*

Schindler: *I could have got more. I could have got more. I made more money, threw away so much money, didn't do enough. Why did I buy this car? Ten more people, and this gold pin, two more people, at least one more person, one more person who is dead. I didn't.*

My friends, the passion that Schindler had for saving Jews from physical death should be eclipsed by our passion to rescue people from an eternal hell.