

A Faithful Alternative

6.27.10

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Jude 17-23

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“But...” Clear contrast between the behavior of the false teachers and themselves.

“remember” Go back, remain clear on what you were told.

“predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Warnings from the lead messengers.

“last time” period of time between Jesus’ first and second comings.

“scoffers, following their own ungodly passions...cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”

The non-Christian, false teachers we were warned about in v. 3-16 and the damage they can do.

P: Much of Christianity is about remembering what we already know.

How’s your spiritual memory?

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.” “Keep” is the key command here. The other participles are how we fulfill it.

P: We have a responsibility to “keep ourselves in the love of God” by “building ourselves up in the most holy faith,” “praying in the Holy Spirit,” and “waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

What Do Each of These Mean and How Do We Do Them?

1. “Keep yourselves in the love of God.”
 - a. Verb establishes the Believer’s responsibility to faithfully “work out” what God is “working in” him. (Phil. 2:12-13)
 - b. You can’t “work out” what has never been “worked in.”
 - i. Have I responded to the love of God? Have I turned from sin and trusted in Christ?
 - ii. If so, we need to give careful attention to the ways that Jude tells us to “keep ourselves in the love of God” in this text.
2. “Building yourselves up in the most holy faith.”
 - a. Bolstering, establishing, encouraging. Think “Spiritual Brick-masonry”
 - b. Happens primarily through the Word. Sunday. Groups. Relationships.
3. “Praying in the Holy Spirit.”
 - a. Not a reference to speaking in tongues, as some suggest. A separate discussion. Praying in line with and according to the will of God, as directed by the Spirit

(Eph. 6:18).

b. Begins with the Word. Word guides informs and transforms our prayers.

4. “Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

a. Looking forward to the second coming of Christ. Living in expectation.

b. Just look around at the broken world. Remember this world is not our home.

How are you doing “keeping yourself in the love of God,” by “building yourself up in the most holy faith,” “praying in the Holy Spirit,” and “waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ?” What needs to change?

“And have mercy on those who doubt, save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.” Most likely referring to 3 groups of people in their midst. 1. Those who are largely faithful but slightly wavering in their faith. 2. Those who are in serious danger of abandoning the faith altogether. 3. Unclear, but possibly a reference the false teachers with a “love the sinner, but hate the sin” posture.

P: Applying the Gospel will help us greatly in doing all three things.

1. We show mercy to others because we have been shown mercy by God.
2. The Gospel reminds us of the eternal urgency of the situation.
3. The Gospel allows us to be refute the lies and still love the liar.

Because Jesus perfectly fulfilled these commands on our behalf, we can now fulfill them in His power.

Works Consulted: MacArthur Study Bible, ESV Study Bible, James and Judas : Half-Brothers of Jesus Speak, New Bible Commentary, Holman Bible Handbook, Bible Reader’s Companion.