

weakest Christian on his knees.” Never underestimate the power of prayer.

*The third way to keep yourself in the love of God is by ...*

c. **Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life**

- 1) The phrase *looking for* means expecting or waiting with anticipation for something.
- 2) The *mercy* speaks of God’s kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted. In context, this mercy is yet future *unto eternal life*. **God has already mercifully saved true Christians from the condemnation of sin in hell, but one day He will come and take us to glory at which time He will mercifully change our mortal bodies into glorified bodies.** At that day, sin will no longer plague us. (Philippians 3:20) *"For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."* (1 Corinthians 15:53) *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."*
- 3) *When we look forward to an event with great anticipation, it occupies our constant thoughts. We talk about it. We dream about it. We prepare for it.*
- 4) Waiting with anticipation for the Lord’s return when He will mercifully rescue us from these sinful mortal bodies will help us keep ourselves in the sphere of God’s love. It will motivate us to live for His glory while we wait.

**Conclusion:** The best way to keep yourself strong against false teachings is to keep yourself in the love of God – that is, in a close sweet relationship with God that will enable Him to bless you. Such a relationship is possible if you will build up yourself in the most holy faith through passionate Bible study, by praying in the Holy Spirit, and by looking eagerly for God’s coming mercy. If you are a Christian, all of these are within your reach. If you are not a Christian, trust Christ today.

**Song:** Take My Life and Let - 393

# Flourishing Amid Apostasy

*12 August 2018 AM – Jude 1:20-21 – Jude18 – Scott Childs*

**Introduction:** In our veggie garden, we have learned that one of the best ways to keep our plants free from disease and pests is to keep them well fed, watered and weeded. When they are healthy, they are able to resist enemies. The same is true for Christians resisting false teachers. We need flourishing relationships with God.

**Transition:** In our text, God gives us a command and then He gives us three participles that show us how to obey His command.

## 1. Look First at the Command (v.21)

### a. Keep yourselves

- 1) The word used here means to guard, to keep, to attend to carefully, or to take care of. We find this word in 68 N.T. verses where it is frequently translated keep, observe, watch, and reserved. Jude used it in three previous verses as preserved (v.1); kept and reserved (v.6); and reserved (v.13).
- 2) It is a direct **command** from God for us to keep and guard ourselves.
- 3) We each must keep or guard **ourselves** against the false teachings and persuasive talk of apostates. As your pastor, I can warn you of danger, but **you** must guard yourself. I cannot do that for you.

### b. Keep yourselves in the love of God

- 1) While others may fall away to follow false teachers, you must keep yourself *“in the love of God”*. Therefore, *“in the love of God”* must refer to a flourishing relationship with God that does not partake in the apostates’ sins. Remember, their sins include: **lasciviousness** (uncontrolled lust), **denying the Lord, speaking evil against leaders, rejecting God’s ways, being covetous and deceitful, opposing leaders, serving self, boasting of empty spiritual gifts, causing shame, leading others astray, murmuring, complaining, walking after lusts, exaggerating, flattering, mocking God, and causing divisions.**

- 2) As parents, we love our children, yet they miss the benefits and blessings of our love when they are not obediently walking in close fellowship with us.
- 3) Living in the sphere of God's love is keeping ourselves in a flourishing relationship with Him so He is able to shower all of His love upon us. <sup>(Wuest)</sup> (Psalms 1:1-2) "*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.*" God always loves us, but we miss the blessing of His love when we walk in the flesh.
- 4) God **commands** that **you** keep **yourself** in the sphere of God's love. Keep yourself in sweet fellowship with the Lord. *Next, Jude tells us how to do that.*

## 2. Jude Lists Three Ways to Keep in God's Love (v.20)

*The first way to keep yourself in the love of God is by ...*

### a. Building up yourselves on your most holy faith

- 1) The words *building up* describe the work of building upon a previous foundation. Spiritually, it describes edifying.
- 2) To keep yourself in the sphere of God's love, you must be building up **yourself** spiritually. I cannot do it for you. I can only help.
- 3) The foundation on which you are to build is your *most holy faith*. This is a superlative or highest form of faith, the holiest faith. Faith here is not your trust in God. It is the whole of Christian doctrine found in the Bible. It is the body of truth Jude described in verse 3. That faith is holy because God has set it apart as our spiritual manual.
- 4) This first protection against false teaching is for you to build up **yourself** spiritually on the most holy faith. How can you do this?
  - a) Certainly careful Bible study is the main way. Careful Bible study is a joy once you yield to God in this area and have a genuine desire to grow spiritually.
  - b) As you daily begin to discover treasures in the Bible, write them down and make them part of your life.

Peter may have had this in mind when he urged us to add to our faith. (2 Peter 1:5-9) "*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*"

*The second way to keep yourself in the love of God is by ...*

### b. Praying in the Holy Spirit

- 1) Kenneth Wuest states that praying in the Holy Ghost, "means that if the saint expects to really pray, he must be Spirit-filled or Spirit-controlled. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is the prerequisite to effectual praying. The Spirit, when yielded to, leads us in our petitions and generates within us the faith necessary to acceptable and answered prayer."
- 2) Prayer is an important part of our spiritual armour. (Ephesians 6:18) "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*"
- 3) "The Christian must not only study the Scriptures if he is to grow in the faith and be of use to others, but he must also pray in the Spirit; for the battle against false teaching is not won by argument." (Green quoted by Rogers)
- 4) Yes, to keep yourself in the love of God, you must spend quality time in prayer each day. It is through prayer that we confess sin and receive God's cleansing. In prayer we fellowship with God and worship Him. Prayer is the avenue by which we ask God for guidance and wisdom. (Hebrews 4:16) "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"
- 5) Remember these wise quotations, "Prayer can do anything God can do." "Satan trembles when he sees the