

Thursday Evening Bible Class.

On some make a difference

22nd October 2020

Jude 22

Jude commenced his epistle by urging believers to contend earnestly for the faith verse 3: *it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith.* In the following verses he explains why- there are certain men crept in unawares, ungodly men, denying God, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Men motivated not by faith, hope and love, but by the lust of power, feeling important, wanting recognition, desiring a following and wanting to be centre of attention. This is often the cause of apostasy, bringing in new ideas, over complicating the simplicity that is in Christ, turning the truth of God into a lie, just so to look intelligent, clever, and get a reputation. Quite often this is because people like the cover, or religion, like to appear holy and pious, and yet, use it as a cloak for their sin, to enable them to carry on a sinful life undisturbed. All of this Jude explains, in dramatic detail choosing examples carefully and sums them all up in verse 16: *These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.* In this Jude has explained why it is so important to contend earnestly for the faith, when the majority who claim to be religious simply want to destroy and distort the faith, water it down, pick and choose, so instead of the faith, there are faiths everywhere, everyone's faith is of equal merit, and no longer is there any concept of absolute truth. What about this? does it mean the true disciples of Christ, reduced to a miniscule minority give up? Not at all, Jude goes on to explain – how – to contend earnestly for the faith. He explains verse 20 *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, Keep yourselves, guard yourselves, in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* Look for the mercy,

pray for it, it isn't automatic and unconditional. Forewarned is forearmed. You know that false religion is everywhere, empty promises, false hopes, how to contend earnestly, - by building up yourselves in the most holy faith.

This is exactly what we are doing now, by having Bible classes and sharing the study together. It is why we persist in deep research, getting below the surface, digging, and searching, checking that what we believe is true. Being humble and when we get wrong ideas, having the humility to change. Four steps then, building up, praying in the spirit, - or in accordance with the will of God, keeping yourselves, looking for the mercy, these steps fortify and strengthen each one to be equipped to survive the onslaught of the enemies of the truth. Jude then exhorts, *of some* he says, verse 22 *have compassion...* even false teachers can receive the mercy of God, - if they humble themselves! All sins can be forgiven if they are acknowledged and repented of, so discretion must be exercised, when dealing with an individual who is going off on a tangent - as we have received mercy, so we should show mercy, and if there is an opportunity to convert someone who has been led astray, every effort should be made, for those who are in doubt, or struggling with their faith, whilst those who are hardened or arrogantly stubborn, they have to be left to their own devices. *Making a difference*. By looking at different translations we can see that the KJV may not be the most helpful on this occasion.

The New English Translation (NET) 22 And have mercy on those who waver;

The Revised Standard Version (RSV) And convince some, who doubt;

The Diaglott: And making a difference, some indeed do you pity.

So, from these translations and the following verse, we can establish that there are two classes of people that although they may be wandering off they are not quite yet the wandering stars who are out

of orbit as Jude explains in verse 13. It is true that there are many who apostatise, and turn away from the truth, and would lead others away with them to assuage their guilty consciences and persuade others of their position to justify themselves. But in a life of dealing with such characters we must not get so over sensitive that as soon as we find someone amongst us who is weak in the faith, or struggling, needs some space, or is in doubt, and is wobbly, we can condemn, and discipline, and tell them to get in line or else. But Jude is teaching that rather than condemn them and avoid them, rather than tick them off disapprovingly, the key, Jude says is to show mercy, make time for them, convince them, show pity, show empathy, and be gentle, (even David implored those who were chasing after Absalom that rebellious showman, - deal gently with the lad) try to draw alongside, and show good influence, and slowly, slowly turn them around, until they are strong enough again, until their faith is strong, and they are wholly convinced, enthused once more.

However, not all cases are the same, and this is where the need to contend earnestly is required. We have to be perceptive. People are different. Some slowly fall away, because of unanswered doubts, but in verse 23, others fall away because of sin, and the resultant remorse, and unworthiness, and guilt can overtake them. ... *others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.* Others save with fear... pulling them out of the fire, their demise is obvious and immediate, they need to be assisted to get away from the temptation, effort must be made, the stark facts have to be addressed, so that the person can see what they are doing to themselves, and take action if they are so minded. However, we note the words, to speak to such a one – with fear! This reminds us a little of Paul's words to Galatians 6:1 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* In

dealing with such sensitive and personal issues, or even issues regarding wrong ideas, and when someone gets a bee in their bonnet about something, we must exercise great care and caution looking to ourselves, lest we be adversely affected, and our own garments become spotted with sin. Then it is us who need to be pulled out of the certain fire of judgement reserved for the unrepentant and the proud. As Paul to the Corinthians reminds us: 1 Cor 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Brother Terry