

Sermon Series: Contending for the Faith

September 20, 2020

Sermon Title: "Keeping Ourselves in the Love of God" from Jude 1:20-23

Today's Scripture: Jude 20–23

Prayer

Main point: Unlike the lifestyles promoted by false teachers, we are to live our lives in total obedience to the Father guided by the Holy Spirit and in view of the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

1. We are commanded to keep ourselves in the "Good Graces" of our Loving Father. **keep yourselves in the love of God**
 - Genuine believers will always be loved by God with a parental love reserved for his adopted children. **But you, beloved**, Jude calls his readers "beloved". That is their status. That is our status. Nothing can change that.
 - We are his adopted children. **Ephesians 1:5 "In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will", (ESV)** It is not possible to be "un-adopted" by God. Once we are in the faith by having received from God the gift of faith to repent and believe, we are now his forever. There is never a doubt about losing one's salvation.
 - There are times we need to remind ourselves of this truth and turn for assurance to **Romans 8:37–39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)**
 - Your Arminian friends will tell you that none of those things will separate you from the love of God but **you** can, you have the power to choose to un-decide your allegiance to Christ.
 - Without getting too far astray from Jude let me say that God would be the most cruel God ever to give us assurances of being adopted into his forever family and then say to us you are on your own and un-adopted if you choose to run away.
 - The OT had a symbol for this relationship. It is the term and role called a "bond slave. If that slave ran away from his Master, having already voluntarily chosen to be a forever slave, there was no turning back and becoming independent again. Once the dowel was drilled through the ear lobe, that slave was forever marked with his symbol of ownership.
 - We too are marked with a symbol of ownership, it's called a seal. That seal is not visible but it is just as unbreakable. **Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (ESV)**

- So, we can never be “un-loved” by the Father just as a parent would never disown their own child no matter what. But, we can fall out of the “Good Graces” of our Father into the category of the disobedient. The verse above stated we can grieve the HS. We can do things that cause the heart of the HS to be upset with our rebellion and refusal to follow his guidance and convictions.
 - When this happens we are under the heavy hand of God’s discipline as described in Hebrews 12 **Hebrews 12:5–6 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” (ESV)**
 - The word “keep” is in the aorist tense which normally means do this in a fixed point of time or it happened in a fixed point in time. But digging deeper¹ we see that what the author meant to say was this: “Keep yourselves in a state of being loved by God”. In other words, don’t wander off into disobedience. Stay on the path of obedience, something the entire Book of Proverbs reminds us to do.
2. We keep ourselves in a state of being under God’s good graces, by right thinking (believing), right praying, and right waiting.
- We keep ourselves in a state of being under God’s good graces, by **Right thinking. building yourselves up in your most holy faith**
 - The Early church met daily (mainly because in her infancy she needed constant supply of milk and then meat in order to survive – we may get to that in the future too). Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching . . .
 - Paul instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (ESV)
 - The apostles’ teaching is singular. They didn’t say truths or teachings (pl) because there is only one truth and one faith, the apostolic faith. Churches over time have tried to put that into creeds which are very helpful, one is called the Apostolic Creed, another is the Nicene Creed.
 - The main feature of the Apostolic Creed is to see Jesus in both his saving role and judging role. One way to say it is this: We are saved by Jesus from Jesus.
 - The main feature of the Nicene Creed is to re-state the divinity of Christ and that he is of the same essence as the Father.
 - The Augsburg Confession was written by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon in 1530 and is supposed to be to this day the main confessional used by Lutherans. Oh how I wish it was.

¹ <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/9733F61247356158CD0467BCDD8299D1/S205863101600026Xa.pdf/div-class-title-tense-time-aspect-and-the-ancient-greek-verb-div.pdf>

- The Westminster Confession was written in 1643-1653 (10 years of meetings) in response to England's civil war to shore up for the church the main teachings of Reformed Theology. This is the dominant Confession of Reformed Christianity used back then to reform the Anglican Church.
 - The London Baptist Confession (1677, ratified in 1689) is the main Baptist confession used to define our faith, and it continued the traditions of the Reformers but included the concepts of believer's baptism in contrast to Paedobaptism practiced by the Presbyterians and Congregationalists.
 - So, if you know your creeds and you know your confessions, which are exhausting attempts by godly men to put what Scripture is saying in the most precise language and wording, then you will be building yourselves up in the most holy faith. You will be studying the genuine and will be able to distinguish it from the false teachings of the false teachers today.
- We keep ourselves in a state of being under God's good graces, by **Right praying**, and praying in the Holy Spirit,
 - This simply means prayer guided by the Holy Spirit. It does not mean speaking in tongues otherwise it would be contradicting Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians that says not everyone speaks in tongues.
 - It is not saying the same prayer over and over again, Jesus warns us of that in the gospels. I think God gets tired of hearing us say the same things again and again.
 - It is not falling asleep while you pray or letting your mind wander off while you pray.
 - It is listening to the HS and asking Him to put thoughts into your mind that need to be prayed about starting with confession. Ask the HS to reveal to you what sins need confessing first before attempting to begin your requests.
 - It is also a matter of asking the HS to give you the same passion he has for the requests you are asking for. If you are praying for the unborn and agonizing over the sin of abortion then it ought to move you to compassion and possibly tears.
 - It is asking the HS to pray for you when you no longer feel adequate to express your emotions. Paul says in Romans 8:26–27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (ESV)
- We keep ourselves in a state of being under God's good graces, by **Right waiting** waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life
 - If our constant focus is a holy anticipation of our Lord's return, then it will affect every area of our lives. It will affect how we spend our money, and our time. It will affect our thoughts and motives. It will affect our relationships and our

- conversations. Since we know it is soon, our words will be gracious but deadly serious (more on this next week). We will not hold back when we know someone is going to hell in their hatred for Christ and their refusal to believe.
- Here is what Paul says in regard to how focusing on the return of Christ affects our walk: **Titus 2:11–14** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (ESV)
 - Be honest. You do house cleaning before your guests arrive. The more honored the guest the more cleaning you do. Well, it is no different when it comes to Christ. He is coming. He will rapture you. The Bible speaks of the kind of clothes we will be wearing when that hour arrives. Will they be stained and soiled by the sins of this world or will they be washed and bleached by the blood of Christ and constant confession and living for Him?

Final word:

If you discipline your own children's behavior and language and attitudes for ungodly content, should you not discipline yourself with the same standards for the glory of God?