



Hey Jude Week 4: "Mercy, Fire & Love" Sermon Discussion Guide

GATHERING

1. Outside of your parents, who had the biggest influence on you becoming a Christian?
2. Who is the closest person to you who is not a follower of Christ?

LOOKING AT THE PASSAGE

In the last portion of this short letter Jude changes his focus. He has been talking about the false teachers (shepherds who feed only themselves) but now he addresses his congregation about how they are to respond. In the context of the letter Jude is probably talking about people affected to certain degrees by the false teachers. But in his guidelines we see wisdom on the different ways we share the message of Jesus with those outside the family of God.

Read Jude 17-19

1. The first thing Jude shares is that the presence of people who oppose the gospel, "scoffers," is not a surprise. There will always be scoffers. What do you think Jude means by "last times," especially if he is writing to a church 2000 years ago but still pertains to us?
2. Compare Jude's words in v. 18 with 2 Peter 3:3. What does this say about the authority of the apostles in the church even at this early stage?
3. Jude tells us three things about the false teachers in verse 19. What are they and what do you think they look like in church leaders?

Read Jude 20-21

In this section Jude tells us that we need to continue to cultivate our own spiritual lives. He calls it "building yourselves up in the most holy faith."

1. Jude says that we should build ourselves up in the faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. What does this do in our lives according to verse 21? What kinds of things build us up in the faith?
2. Assuming that we are not loved by God because of our ability to build ourselves up in the faith, what do you think it means that prayer and spiritual growth "keep" us in God's love?

Read Jude 22-23

In these two verse Jude tells his congregation how they should respond to those outside the faith. He probably has in mind those who are vulnerable to the false

teachers, but the church was also surrounded by skeptics and pagans, so the application would have been broader.

1. How many groups does he seem to be focusing on in these verses?
2. Jude tells us to be merciful to those who doubt. How is that different from the ways he talks about the false teachers in 11-12? Why do you think his attitude is so different?
3. Sometimes we are merciful with people as they question the faith. Other times we snatch people from the fire. What might be an example of the second situation?
4. In the last group we show mercy and fear. And we are to hate "even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh." This sounds like a harsh comment, but it is related to the vision of an Old Testament prophet in Zechariah 3.

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan^{1a} standing at his right side to accuse him. ²The Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

³Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. ⁴The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."

⁵Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by.

In this passage the filthy clothes represent the past sin of the high priest. God is refusing to allow Satan to accuse the priest despite his past sin because the priest has been rescued from the exile (snatched from the fire) and restored. How might the Zechariah passage illuminate Jude 23?

APPLICATION

The applications of this passage come from the three different topics.

1. Jude reminds us that there are always people in the church who cause division and sin (scoffers). Have you ever had an experience in a church that has left you disillusioned? Does that still affect how you participate now?
2. How are you doing in building yourself up in the most holy faith? How is your prayer life? Do your prayers keep you in the love of God or not?
3. Who are the people you are called to "love into the kingdom"? Do you have a hard time being merciful to them? Are there any that might need snatching from the fire? What makes those situations so drastic?
4. Can we be people who love those outside the faith even as we hate the sinful deeds of the world?