

15. Learning How to Minister as Christians

In the last two topics, we have seen that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the character of false teachers and the judgment that they will receive because of their ungodly lives. After warning about these false teachers, Jude concluded his short letter by writing about the way that we should serve the Lord as Christians so that we will carry out the ministry that the Lord has for us in this world. That will be the focus in this topic.

In Jude 1:17-19, we read, “But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.” Here, we see that the apostles had been warning the Christians that there would be mockers who would walk after their own ungodly desires. Peter wrote, in 2 Peter 3:3, “Knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts.” John said, in 1 John 2:18, “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” Paul also had warned, in Acts 20:29-30, “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” As a result, we see various apostles gave warnings.

We see several characteristics of these mockers. First, we see that they walk according to their own ungodly lusts. The word “ungodly” speaks of a lack of reverence for God. Romans 1:18 says, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.” Here, we see that those who lack reverence for God face eternal judgment. The word translated “lusts” speaks of a desire or craving for what is forbidden. Ungodly people are focused on satisfying their own sinful lusts.

Second, we see that mockers are sensual persons. Here, we see that such people desire to fulfill their sinful desires. James 3:15 says, “This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.” Third, such mockers cause divisions. The word translated “cause divisions” speaks of those who work to cause separations between other people. Such people enjoy seeing others in conflict. Fourth, we see that these mockers do not have the Holy Spirit. This statement makes it clear that such individuals are false teachers who never were Christians.

Jude 1:20-23 goes on to say, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” In contrast to false teachers, we see that John told these Christians whom he loved how they were to live and serve the Lord as Christians.

First, we are to build ourselves up on our most holy faith. In order to build on our faith, we must build on the right foundation. Matthew 7:24 says, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of

Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Then, 1 Corinthians 3:11 says about that Rock, “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” We build ourselves up as we take root in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Here, we see that we become established in the faith as we are rooted and grounded in Christ.

Second, we are to pray in the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:26-27 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God.*” Here, we see that the Holy Spirit takes our prayers and brings them into agreement with the will of God.

Third, we are to keep ourselves in the love of God. Ephesians 3:17-19 says, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” This was part of the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians. We keep ourselves in the love of God as we are obedient to Him. Christ said, in John 15:10, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.” Our desire is to be obedient to God.

Fourth, we are to look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word translated “looking for” means *to wait for or to receive*. Titus 2:13 says, “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” We can look forward to the return of Christ because of the fact that Christ showed us His mercy when He forgave our sins and placed His righteousness on us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ became sin for us so that the Father could place the righteousness of Christ on us at the moment of our salvation. As a result, we have received eternal life.

We see that we are also called by God to help others experience this same mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word translated “making a distinction” means *to do something without doubting or to do it in such a way that it will make a difference*. Peter said, in Acts 11:12, “Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.” We are to learn to make a distinction about the way that we present the Gospel to various individuals so that all have the opportunity to hear and understand.

With some people, we are to show compassion because they think that they are so sinful that Christ could never accept them. In John 4:17-18, Christ showed compassion and showed the Samaritan woman that He accepted her even though He knew all about her background. Those verses say, “The woman answered and said, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your

husband; in that you spoke truly.” As a result of that compassion, we see that many Samaritans believed as John 4:39 says, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, He told me all that I *ever* did.” That compassion made a great difference in the life of the Samaritan woman.

In contrast, some people have been deceived and think that their own efforts will save them. They need to be saved by fear. Christ told Nicodemus, in John 3:5-7, “...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'” As a religious leader, Nicodemus was depending on his own good works and needed to be confronted with the fact that his own works could never save him.

We also see a third group. These are people who need to be pulled out of the fire because they are in total rebellion against God. Christ spoke to the scribes and Pharisees, in Matthew 23:13 and said, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves*, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.” Here, we see that this group was in such rebellion against Christ that they were doing everything that they could do to prevent others from receiving eternal life. Saul was such an individual. Acts 9:1-2 says, “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.” Even some from this group will be shown mercy as we see from the example of Saul.

Jude 1:24-25 concludes the book by saying, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.” Even though Jude warned the Christians that there were many false teachers who would try to deceive them, Jude also reminded those Christians that Christ is able to keep us from stumbling. In fact, we are reminded that when Christ presents us to the Father that we will be faultless in His sight because of the fact that He is satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins. 1 John 2:1-2 says, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” The word translated “propitiation” means *that which satisfies*. God is satisfied with the payment that Christ made for our sins because we accepted that payment by repentance and faith. This is a fact that we want to help our physical and spiritual children fully understand so that can look forward with great joy to that day when we will stand faultless before the Father because Christ placed His righteousness on us. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to minister effectively knowing God sees them as faultless.