

9/3/23- THE LOVE OF GOD

PASTOR LEE

Distancing
From
God -

- Intro/observations on people who might feel disconnected to God/Church. Examples: "God feels distant from me....not real".....or, "I'm burned out-taking a break" (sometimes the 'break' just continues!)...or, in observing a person's behavior "if that's a Christian, it's not for me".....or someone sins and then runs away...or, God has let XXX happen to me, etc, etc. Perhaps apathy sets in leading to a 'falling away'. Especially vulnerable during 'transition times....(eg. Change of schools, job, relocation, etc.) Sometimes these situations extend far beyond the temporary and become the new norm.

Jude Warns
Against!

- Jude.....Jesus' half-brother....writes just over a page in the New Testament. He, like many of his siblings, didn't believe in Jesus until after the resurrection (ie which of us would ever believe that our brother was God?!). Jude writes of his concern....that is, people in the early Church who *looked* like they believed in Jesus and followed Him but did not. (We can relate to issue even in our own lives/church - -people who say all the right things but are NOT Christ-followers).

Calls On
All
Of Us -

- Jude 1:1- - Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. So he's calling all true followers (children) of God who loves us (out of darkness into His glorious light)....those of the early Church and us today.....with a promise that we are 'kept' by Jesus. (Pastor Lee: if you haven't already been called by God....maybe this is your day He loves you!!!!).

Believe
The
Good News!!

- Jude 1:3- - Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. His eagerness:He saw Jesus live a perfect life, He *witnessed* His miracles, the crucifixion and His resurrection from the dead. He saw God become man, sacrifice Himself, to make us right with Him!! The message was once for all proclaimed and repeated over all these years....the good News (Gospel).

Be Wary
of Those
Perverting
Faith!

- Jude 1:4- - for certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. These are those who come in who are really not among us but rather, create problems. So Jude is warning them (and us) to contend for our faith and defend against discouragers and those superficially professing faith (some even in our Church). Those who wander from their faith....were they ever really true believers in the first place?

Commit
Fully To
HIM!

- John 6:66- - "After this, many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. " (responding to His declaration(s) that those who truly believe in Him ((above money, possessions, etc)) ...as the 'living bread of life' ...shall have eternal life). Jesus was saying, in part, you have to give

your whole life to me....I am your focal point. Even one of His own disciples (Judas Iscariot), who witnessed all his miracles, listened to all his teachings, etc, walked away and sold Him out. And the same phenomenon continues today.

Follow
Jesus!

Completely!

- Jude is saying.....don't be pulled away!!! At the very end of the book, he turns back to the people he was originally addressing and says the same thing again. FOLLOW JESUS....IT IS THE BEST/ONLY WAY TO LIVE!!! Don't be discouraged....keep yourself in the love of God. See Verses 20-23. Key: "Build yourself up in the most holy faith". How? By surrounding/immersing yourself in your faith (eg daily living/obedience, worship, consistent /frequent prayer, scripture study, service, educating/ supporting children in matter of faith, reinforcing those who doubt, etc. etc.).

Pray!

- All of the above with consistency!!Deut 6: 6-9. " ...be on your hearts....impress on your children....tie it on your hands...write them on your forehead, put it on your door". When YOU view/live Jesus as the focal point of your lives, it is modelling, contagious and spreads!
- And (VERSE 20 AGAIN) PRAY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT....IN THE MANY LITTLE MOMENTS OF THE DAY! "Pray without ceasing".
- 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 groaning 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. So it doesn't take great aforethought, skill, insight or knowledge to pray....the Spirit will be there.....He knows your heart, your intentions and God's Will.

Be Merciful
As He Is
With Us!

- Verse 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, *waiting for the mercy of our Lord, Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.* Pastor Lee: people say: "I just wish Jesus would come back" (in light of pain, misery, etc). When things are bad, we look toward Jesus. What shall we do as we wait?.....get busy...be with God....show mercy. Mercy definition: when you should receive judgement or punishment for something but you don't. Mercy is a notion and gift of God replete throughout Scripture. First (Verse 22) have mercy on those who doubt. Be understanding, supportive and merciful. (Someone probably did it for you at some point).

Stark Choice:
1. Trust Jesus
(Heaven)
2. Trust Your-
self
(Hell)

- Verse 23 Save others by snatching them out of the fire.....vivid!!! These are people not looking for Jesus to pay the price (they don't believe)...they think they can handle (via their own good works).....but we all have a choice to make.....ie look to Jesus to pay the price (and attain heaven)or, pay the price ourselves (in a place called Hell). But... we are NOT good enough to pay the price ourselves, so its a choice with a disastrous consequences. As we think of non-believing loved ones, its even a more difficult notion to grapple with (ie my loved one existing forever in a literal hell).
- Taking the literal Hell as the horrifically eternal state that it is (and the unfathomable, ecstatically loving state of Heaven with God), how could we not do everything humanly possible, first and especially to our loved ones, to unwaveringly influence, support, coax, explain, beg....whatever it takes to contend on behalf of connecting with Jesus.

Be Merciful
And
Wary!

- Verse 23 continuing....to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. You will experience people so far/separate from God in their sinfulness, you need to know that He is a loving God....do so with fear....understanding the prospect of being stained with that same sin (joining their world to connect). Be Aware and very careful! Show mercy AND place yourself and stay in the Love of God.

Focus,
Always,
On Jesus

- Remember, we change as we put Jesus first in our lives! Immerse yourselves in Him.....good start: strengthen your Church connection!
- Verse 24-25- - NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM STUMBLING AND TO PRESENT YOU BLAMELESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH GREAT JOY, TO THE ONLY GOD OUR SAVIOR, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, BE GLORY, MAJESTY, DOMINION AND AUTHORITY, BEFORE ALL TIME AND NOW AND FOREVER, AMEN.