

FPFWC Christian Development



Faithful vs. Faithless

March 2024

Spring Quarter

March 2, 2024

Lesson #1 – Sustaining Our Faith

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Jude 17-25

ICE BREAKER –

1. How should our life be different from the lives of the non-Christians around us?
2. What difference does it make that Jesus is able to keep you from falling?
3. What steps do you take to guard against any impure motives in your own faith walk?

Key Verse – “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”—Jude 20–21

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jude is a brief letter, and it reflects a perilous time similar to our circumstances. Some ambitious and prideful people had attached themselves to congregations, presented themselves as leaders, and practiced an immoral lifestyle. Jude calls them “ungodly” people who turn the “grace of our God into lasciviousness” (Jude 4). These intruders exploited their welcome by promoting immorality (v. 4). They mocked the judgment of God and behaved as if God would not hold them accountable for their actions and immoral ethics. They despised authority, spoke evil of others, and sought wealth in their greed (vv. 8, 11). Jude called them “spots in your feasts of charity” who had nothing true or valuable to offer; they were like clouds “without water” and fruitless trees (v. 12). They walked “after their own lusts,” and though they influenced many, their words were filled with their own ambition (v. 16). This was a dangerous time for the churches, and Jude addresses the situation directly with both warning and hope.

Jude, the author of this letter, was the brother of James, and James was one of the elders and leaders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:19; 2:9). Since James was a brother of Jesus, this means Jude was as well. Though both opposed Jesus during His ministry before His death, both became committed believers after the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7; Jude 1).

What we know as the book of Jude was probably a sermon that circulated among several congregations as an open letter. Jude addressed a number of congregations at one time, and they were all endangered by ungodly intruders and leaders. Jude clearly stated his main interest. He encouraged believers to “contend for the faith” that had been delivered to them (Jude 3). He identified the troublemakers, warned that their destiny is the same as that of Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7) and the devil (v. 9), and promised God would execute judgment against the “ungodly” for their “ungodly deeds” (v. 15).

But what are believers to do? How do they “contend for the faith” (Jude 3)? How do believers live out their faith in such perilous times? Jude ends his letter with a call to persevere in the faith. That call is our lesson text for today.

LESSON COMMENTARY

Warning from the Apostles (17–19)

17–19. In the first imperative in the book, Jude reminded his readers **to remember**. The influx of false teachers was predicted by the **apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ** (Ac 20:29–30; 1Tm 4:1; 2Tm 3:1–5; 4:3–4). These **mockers** who **cause divisions** were clearly unbelievers. They were **devoid of the Spirit**. Possession of the Spirit in one’s life is a clear indication of regeneration. Failure to possess the Spirit means one is unregenerate and still unforgiven of sin (cf. Rm 8:9).

V. The Program for the Faithful (20–23)

A. Bible Study (20a)

20a. In contrast to unbelieving false teachers, believers were encouraged to build themselves up **on** [their] **most holy faith**. Previously, Jude admonished his readers to contend for the faith (3), which is revealed through Scripture and demands one’s constant attention, while here he encouraged them to grow in their faith.

B. Prayer (20b)

20b. Jude also encouraged his readers to be **praying in the Holy Spirit**. This is not a reference to speaking in tongues, but to prayer that is under the authority of the Holy Spirit in accordance with God’s Word and so guided and energized by the Holy Spirit (Eph 6:18).

C. Abiding in His Love (21a)

21a. Believers were further admonished to keep themselves **in the love of God**. Believers do this by focusing on prayer that is energized by the Holy Spirit and by continually being built up in the faith (cf. 20). God’s love that first drew the believer (1) should be demonstrated to others (2). Jesus’ words from Jn 15:19 apply here: “I chose you out of the world.”

D. Looking for His Coming (21b)

21b. Furthermore believers must be looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus **to eternal life**. At Christ’s return the promised eternal state will be realized.

E. Soul Winning with Discretion (22–23)

22–23. Until that day, the believer is to continually share the mercy he has received with others. Some are **doubting**, needing to be won to Christ through love. Some need to

be arrested from their normal course of life, for they figuratively are snatched from the fire. Their garments may be **polluted by the flesh**. While the believer detests the unbeliever's sin, he loves the sinner and seeks to reach him with the truth.

VI. The Doxology (24–25)

A. His Grace to Us (24)

24. Jude concluded with the One who is able **to keep [us] from stumbling**. He furthermore can **make [us] stand in the presence of His glory blameless**. Christ is able to take sinful people and make them fit for heaven, and keep them secure until they are in His presence. This is the assurance that brings **great joy**.

B. Our Worship for Him (25)

25. To such a one truly belong the **glory, majesty, dominion and authority**, which can only be accomplished **through Jesus Christ**. A final statement asserts that these qualities always rightfully belong to God. **Amen**. So let it be!

LESSON NUGGET – **What We Must Do:** Remember the Word and build yourself up in your Christian faith. True believers are preserved in Jesus Christ (Jude 1:1), and they prove this by keeping themselves in God's love (Jude 1:21). Therefore, God can keep them from falling (Jude 1:24-25).

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word for Today Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary