



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Jude 17-23

“Christendom in the Light of the Epistle of Jude (6)”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are turning again to the Epistle of Jude, the brother of our Lord, and today the sixth in our series of studies on “Christendom in the Light of Jude.” We’re reading verse 17 through verse 23.

“But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, ‘In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts.’ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.”

The expression “worldly-minded” creates, I believe, a false impression from the original text because the point is not so much worldly-mindedness as if a person is following the schemes, the attitudes, the goals of the world, but rather it’s an expression, that of course would be just as wrong as that of which he speaks, but what he really is talking about is those who have only natural life within them. And so merely natural in the sense of having only physical life within them, no spiritual life, creates, I think, a more accurate impression of what Jude means. He concludes with “devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy

Ghost (or in the Holy Spirit) keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.”

The next two verses if you have different versions, and usually in our audience we do, we have some who will be reading the NIV, some reading the New American Standard Bible, some reading the Authorized Version, the next two verses probably are as difficult textually, that is to ascertain the true text as any place in the New Testament. Fortunately, the things that are stated are relatively minor things that are stated plainly elsewhere in the Bible so we’re not losing anything by the difficulty. What I want you to simply understand is the reason for the difference in the various versions, and all of them differ and fundamentally it’s because textual critics are just like you and me. They differ among themselves, even evangelical textual critics. And they are not sure how, in the great mass of manuscript material, to be sure of the precise text at this point, but as I say it has no doctrinal significance that I know of. I’m reading the New American Standard Bible and verse 22 and 23 read in this edition, “And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these admonitory words from the brother of our Lord, Jude. We thank Thee for the marvelous way in which they instruct us concerning the trends and the viewpoints and the goals and the values of the world in which we are living today so many centuries later. And we thank Thee particularly that this little book speaks so accurately and correctly and pointedly to many of the difficulties that we face within the professing church of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The apostles were surely not wrong that in the last day, or last times, “There should come mockers walking after their own lusts,” and we have seen this, and we see this. And we ask, O God, that Thou wilt preserve that church of Jesus Christ from error both doctrinally and morally.

We thank Thee for the promises of the word of God and we thank Thee particularly for the revelation of the divine Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And we thank Thee for the unfolding of the plan of salvation by which the gospel goes forth and becomes the means by which we enter into the possession of eternal life in the knowledge of Thee, in the knowledge of the Son of God through the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee, Lord; we are indeed indebted to Thee eternally.

We thank Thee for all of the blessings that are ours through Christ, and we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt preserve us from error and evil. We pray for the church of Jesus Christ wherever it meets today and for all of the members that Thou wilt do for each one that which Jude exhorts us to do.

And we pray for Believers Chapel. We ask Thy blessing upon us and upon those who are our friends, upon the members, the visitors, for our elders and deacons, and those who have the oversight of us. We pray for each one of them. And guide and direct us in such a way that the local church in this instance may continue to be a light of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the gospel that is associated with him and his death.

We pray for the sick. We ask, O Lord, that Thou wilt encourage them. Strengthen them. Give them the sense of Thy presence. Enable them to deal with these difficult times in their lives. Give healing, Lord, in accordance with Thy will. Bless their families; supply their needs, and bless those who minister to them as well.

And Lord at the Christmas season we especially remember that Thou wilt give us boldness to acknowledge in our conversations with our friends and others the fact that our trust is in him who gave himself a sacrifice for our sins. Give us courage, spiritual courage, to proclaim Christ. Deliver us from spiritual cowardice, and in not taking advantage of our opportunities.

Lord, we ask that Thou wilt direct us during the week that is before us. May our lives be pleasing to Thee. We ask especially for any who may be sick, who have other problems and trials, Lord undertake for each of them. Now, we ask Thy blessing upon our meeting as we sing, as we listen to the word of God expounded. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] As I mentioned in the Scripture reading, we are continuing with the exposition of the Epistle of Jude, and our theme has been “Christendom in the Light of Jude.” In this vivid section Jude concludes his warning against the apostates with their theological and moral departure from God’s word. He’s dealt with admonitions from the Old Testament, the passages that have to do with Cain, that have to do with Balaam, that have to do with Korah, and he has also dealt with the admonition that is contained in one of the books with which most of us are not very familiar, the Old Testament apocalyptic pseudepigraphal, or false writing, pseudepigraphal 1 Enoch from which he has quoted, but now he turns to remind his readers of the apostolic warnings.

And so he says, “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The completed picture of apostate libertinism that Jude presents is very striking, but it’s very black because he speaks of them as sensualists. He says they are merely natural individuals that have only natural life within them, no spiritual life. They are separationists in that they cause division within the body of Christ and in the local bodies as well, and most of all they are without the spirit. So we could call them spiritless creepers because he has said earlier that, “Certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation.” So these are the warnings that Jude has set before us.

And the picture one gets is of a professing church even at this early date in which there were individuals who were not possessors of Christian life. They had invaded the holy halls of the earthly temple of God, the local churches and the church of the redeemed. And one must, I think, feel as you read these verses that the picture that Jude presents is no bleaker than the situation that exists today. As you think about the church today, if you are following at all the things that have happened within the professing Christian church, you know that the doctrine of the word of God has been attacked from without as well as from within. And many of those who’ve attacked it from without, that is are individuals who do not have faith in Christ are nevertheless within the professing body.

We have individuals who have like Hugh J. Schonfield suggested that the Lord Jesus Christ did not really die. In the *Passover Plot*, a volume written about twenty years ago, that particular book

and that viewpoint ignores the general, the deadly character of Jesus' wounds, the careful examination by experience Roman executioners, the blood and the water, the constricting grave clothes about our Lord, the crushing weight of the spices. We know, for example, that when Gamaliel was buried, he was buried with spices that were eighty pounds in weight on his body, and what's more, was psychologically, it should be psychologically impossible to think of someone who almost died, but didn't really die creating the kind of impression that he created upon the apostles. How could someone who crept half dead out of a tomb, needing bandaging, strengthening in every care, someone who subsequently died in obscurity have given the impression that he was the Lord of life and conqueror over the grave?

In the *Passover Plot* Mr. Schonfield suggests that Jesus was drugged and survived his ordeal in the tomb long enough to say a few words to his rescuers before expiring, and what is rather interesting about that is that Mr. Schonfield, after a scholarly book, near the end of the book, expresses doubts about his own reconstruction of the events. So we had individuals like this who are attacking the church from without and attacking it very strongly, often with scholarly words, and scholarly works. But we have attacks that are more troubling that come from within the professing body. For example, attacks from some of the charismatics of our day but not the charismatics only, attacks from some of the well-known professing Christian theologians. Let me just recite some of them for you to let you know in case you've not kept up with this that we are dealing with a situation in which individuals within church bodies, such as our church body, do not hold the doctrines of the word of God.

One well-known Methodist theologian has said that the church's teaching concerning the Bible from its earliest days has been an error and the Bible itself is an erroneous book, and the teachings that are set forth within it are also in error that man an ordained minister of one of our leading denominations, the Methodist denomination. Kenneth Copeland, a charismatic, has written, and this will give you some idea of the doctrinal viewpoints of these leaders in the charismatic movement. The believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus Christ, he has asserted. He also

writes in another place, “You don't have a God in you. You are one.” His philosophy is “Dogs begat dogs, cats begat cats. And God begets gods,” and so all of us who have believed in Christ are little gods. In fact those are his precise words. “You are little gods.” The biblical teaching as you reflect upon it directly contradicts statements in the word of God. “Here, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” In other words, the Christian faith believes in one God, not three gods, one God who subsists in three persons. And there is all the difference in the world between one God who subsists in three persons and three gods. That’s the difference between Christian and paganism. But yet we have individuals within the Christian professing body who are teaching paganism and do not really know it.

Kenneth Hagin, the Fort Worth apostle, according to Oral Roberts, who classifies him as an apostle, says the believer is as much an incarnation as was Jesus of Nazareth, and God has been reproduced within the inside of you. He spoke to those who were listening to him. He informs us that “Even in the great body of full gospel people,” now we can thank God for this, “Many do not know that they are as much sons and daughters of God as Jesus.” In other words, Jesus is no longer, “The only begotten Son of God.” I’m thankful for that little word in which he says, “Even in the great body of full gospel people they don't know this,” because in not knowing it, perhaps they have remained within the evangelical company.

Jimmy Swaggart who has constantly attacked Reformed theology and it’s Calvinism as coming “from the pit of hell,” he may be by his own wanderings from the faith and doctrine and practice qualified to know what goes on there, but [Laughter] nevertheless, he has spoken of the great doctrines of God’s grace in our salvation as coming “from the pit of hell.” He says, “If you believe Calvinism you are in trouble.” And what is Calvinism for him? Well Calvinism for him is, number one, fatalism, no Calvinist has ever believed in fatalism.

And secondly, he says, not only do Calvinists believe in fatalism but they also believe that there is no such thing as a place for the human will in our salvation, no Calvinist takes the position that there is no room for the human will. All Calvinists believe that there must be a response of the

will to the gospel. Calvinists do not believe in free will. They believe that that response is a response initiated by the Holy Spirit; otherwise we could not say that salvation is of the Lord. But we do say that salvation is of the Lord for it is the Lord who moves our wills to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ because our wills are in bondage to sin. But we do not deny a decision of the will. We insist upon the necessity of a decision of the will.

And then for his third analysis of Calvinistic theology he says, “They believe that if you’re once saved you will stay saved.” Well now he is right on that. Calvinists do believe that if you have truly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have been saved that God will preserve you within the family of God. So his batting average is three thirty-three.

Perhaps his conscience kept him from contending that if you believe it you will feel free to live as you please, but that’s the common objection that is raised to “once saved, always saved,” if so, then we can live as we please. And Jimmy seems to have been doing that and maybe that’s the reason he has not said anything about the particular thing because he has had associations with the prostitutes, and then he has given us public, tearful confessions, and then after his tearful confessions he has gone back again to the prostitutes. And so up and down has been his life by his own professions. He defied orders from the respected assemblies of God denomination to refrain from preaching for one year. He assured the public that he was free of moral defect. Oral Roberts said he’s correct because he had seen the demons with their claws embedded in Swaggart’s flesh. He has ability to see beyond that which you and I have. And he insisted that now the rascals were gone from Swaggart after he had made his confession, but that’s before his latest escapade and I don't know what Oral is saying now.

We have it not only among the charismatics, and there are many godly people among the charismatics. Do not misunderstand me. We are talking about some who’ve taken the leadership among them and have taken it for some motives that surely include financial increase in their bank accounts. I ought to say something at this point that Mark Twain was not wrong about everything that he said. He said man was made at the end of weeks work when God was tired. Our Heavenly

Father invented man because he was disappointed in the monkey. [Laughter] Man is the only animal that blushes or needs to. [Laughter] All of those reflect the fact of human sin. We're not denying that at all, and we acknowledge our own sins as well. But nevertheless within the church of Jesus Christ we have things, within the professing church of Jesus Christ, we have things that are very strange that are going on today.

Now I mentioned also that there are some who are not in the charismatic movement. There is, for example, John Hick, a respected theologian and minister, a Presbyterian, a British Presbyterian, and fortunately the American Presbyterian body in which he sought ordination or transfer of his ordination from the British Presbyterian body rejected his application, which shows that there is life in some of the Presbyteries within the Presbyterian church. But he is a British Presbyterian, and he is a person who believes that so far as our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned we don't have any sure knowledge of him. In fact, he says the biblical knowledge or the knowledge we have of Jesus Christ is very scanty. And furthermore he makes the doctrine of the penal substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ the object of his attacks. And yet he is a very, very respected Christian professing theologian in the body that we know as the professing Christian church.

The emphasis on money that is characterized our day is also very startling. Joel Nederhood, who is the speaker on the “Back to God Hour,” as many of you know, is a Christian Reformed minister and a very godly man and a fine preacher. He wrote a chapter not too long ago called “Send No Money to Martin Luther” and takes issue in the article with the evangelical practices of today. Using Luther's background as the background of his comments, he points out that when Luther nailed his theses to the castle church October 31st, 1517, he, by so doing, explosively turned religious discussion from scholarly debate to spiritual revival over Europe, for Luther intended those ninety-five theses to be the subject of debates, that is, theological debates. And they would have public debates over those theses. But they made such an impression that they became the means of the Protestant Reformation that we know about.

One of the major reasons Luther was so disturbed was the fact that the priests were selling indulgences for certain sums which would spring people free of purgatory. And one of the men, Johann Tetzel, or John Tetzel was an especially obnoxious profiteer for the church taking money from the people and he worked right up under Luther’s nose which so finally got to the Reformer that he nailed up his theses.

Evangelicals today are not as blatant, but there is a whole lot of the same thing going on in principle. The Charismatics who promised answered prayer for various things like their handkerchiefs or suggest you put hands on the TV screen and all kinds of other things. They offer you water from the Jordan river and various ways by which they extort money from you. Evangelicals of the milder sort do something of the same thing in principle. And that is they say now after expounding the virtues of a book written by one of their faculty or one of their friends, they then say if you’ll send us a gift, we’ll send you the book. And so it’s a means by which individuals are called upon to give for motives that are not really set forth in the word of God so far as I can determine. What we are seeing in our day is exactly what Jude is talking about. We are seeing individuals who are mockers following after their own ungodly lusts, and they are causing divisions. They are natural men. They are devoid of the spirit of God.

Mark Twain was not at all, all wrong in what he was saying. Well that’s a lengthy introduction. I really didn't mean to talk that long on it, but I think that sometimes people have these things going before their minds and eyes and really don't interact with them, and we need to interact with them as professing Christian people because the Christian church gains a very bad reputation among the lost people because of the things that transpire among many of those bodies.

Well Jude in our section comes back to the main purpose of the letter, and the main purpose of his letter as he explained it in verse 3, was that we should, “Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” And what he does in the verses is he reminds his readers of these mockers who are without the spirit of God. Then he exhorts them to remain in the love of

God and finally exhorts again that they redeem, do the work of redemption that others may also possess the life of God that they possess.

Verse 17, “But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He’s asked them to reflect on the Old Testament revelation and on the truth that was in 1 Enoch. But now he brings it up to their time and reminds them that they ought to remember the words of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. These things he says in effect should not have been unexpected. You should have remembered the words that were spoken by the apostles. Nothing should have been unexpected, and the same thing is true today for the apostles have warned us as well. And we really shouldn't be surprised and I think that Christians that read their Bible are not surprised. They’re just surprised by the fact that they are here, and they’re seeing the things that Scriptures have set forth. And they’re also seeing them in a way that they had not anticipated, so blatantly professing believers moving and working and talking contrary to the word that they say that they uphold. These individuals mocked at morality and perhaps also at the doctrine of the Second Coming because the language is very similar to Peter’s language in the 3rd chapter of his second epistle when he says, “Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation,’” “Mockers walking after their own lusts,” precisely what Jude has said. So, you can imagine that the things that Jude is talking about are the things that Peter talked about, the apostles talked about, and they are things that we in our day should pay careful attention to.

It was just a few years ago in the professing Christian church that one of its leaders said this, about twenty years ago, Kingsley Martin, writing in a symposium called “What I Believe.” This is what he says, “The older code of sexual relationships was founded on two beliefs, the belief that sexual intercourse is for child begetting and bearing, and the necessary dependence of women.” You can see that it’s not very friendly to what the Scriptures say, although he writes as a professing man. He goes on to say that once women have become independent and have earned the right to earn

their own living and once methods of contraception have been developed and perfected the old standards of sexual morality are out of date and must be abandoned. And then these are his words, “the result in our day is a new sexual code. A new code tends to make it the accepted thing that men and women can live together as they will but to demand marriage of them if they decide to have children.” In other words, unlimited sexual intercourse is perfectly acceptable as a moral standard so long as marriage is not entered into and children begotten. This twenty years ago was said to be an up to date morality which puts chastity and purity amongst the outworn things that have been over past. That was a comment by someone else on Kingsley Martin’s words. They seem very foolish to us today twenty, twenty-five years later, now that AIDS has arisen from the very thing that this religious man said was now regarded as perfectly all right. How wrong he was, and how wrong would a man within a church be who followed the advice and counsel of just such a man.

These men are described by Jude in three ways. They are described, and incidentally that little word “these” is contemptuous in verse 19, “these are the ones who cause divisions.” They are merely natural. They are devoid of the spirit. Incidentally he has said in verse 12 that these individuals were in their love feasts, that is, they attended the Lord’s Supper with them. Notice verse 12, “These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear.” So these are the individuals who met with the believers in the observance of the Lord’s Supper, and Jude calls them dividers, gathering their own factions in the midst of the local church and observing the Lord’s Supper with them at the same time. They are men who cause divisions. They are degenerate. They have merely physical life.

You remember the text that Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 2:14, “The natural man,” that’s the same adjective that is used here: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.” The truths of Scripture cannot be understood properly and fully without the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. These individuals are natural, merely natural. They have natural life, but they do not have spiritual life. And to further define it, he states, “They are devoid of the spirit.” They do not have

the spirit. That’s the test of a Christian incidentally. “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his,” Paul the apostle said. In fact, I think it’s perfectly scriptural for me to ask you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ do you have the Holy Spirit? If you do not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, you are not a believing man. “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.” So these individuals are unsaved. They are non-Christians. They have not the spirit. Jude’s warning about them.

Now, he turns to exhortation of the believers. “But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves in the love of God.” That’s a very interesting thing for a Calvinist to say, isn't it? “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” It almost sounds as if Calvinists believe that there is something that we are responsible for, doesn't it? Those who have the idea that Calvinism is passivity, and you just sit on your chair, and Christianity comes to you, and you remain on your chair throughout the rest of your life, and God does everything of you, and you do nothing, and you have no responsibility, have a false idea of what Calvinism is. In fact, you might if you looked at this and you had those ideas you might say, “Well there’s something the matter here if he says that we are to keep ourselves in the love of God.” Why an exhortation like this? And in fact some sound brethren, according to Mr. Spurgeon, have, in his experience, called this kind of exhortation useless, carnal and legal. To which he replied, “My dear brethren I’m not the author of the phrase, and therefore if you have any quarrel with it will you be so kind as to remember that your dispute is with the Holy Spirit and not with me.”

When we believe in the sovereignty of the Lord God, and we do believe in the sovereignty of the Lord God, I’m speaking not for you necessarily but for the company of people that I would regard as Christians who do believe in the sovereignty of God, when we believe in the sovereignty of God we believe just as firmly in human responsibility. We are responsible according to Scripture. So, we are taught in the word of God that we can do nothing without Christ, but at the same time we are exhorted to do all sorts of things and are even bidden to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. If that’s inconsistent, it’s the inconsistency of Scripture and true Christians bow before it.

The exhortations from the word of God are not couched in guarded language and hedged around with limiting phrases like so many of the ways in which we speak. Mr. Spurgeon points out, but Scripture just sets forth these two things as being truth. God is sovereign, and we who are the blessed by the sovereign grace of God are responsible to the word of God.

Now we are not expected to do the things that are set forth in the Holy Scripture of ourselves. We're offered the help of God the Holy Spirit. He works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. But we have that responsibility, the responsibility to rely upon the Holy Spirit to accomplish his work within us. So, we don't have any fear for the truth that God is sovereign, and that we are responsible.

Mr. Spurgeon says if you'll look at this text in its connection you'll see that it lends no sanction to the proud idea that man can keep himself apart from the grace of God. You wouldn't look at this, unless you wanted to say against your Calvinistic friends that their believing inconsistencies. You wouldn't want to say that, “Keep yourselves in the love of God,” is contrary to the Calvinistic truth, or the truth of the grace of God. I won't use the term Calvin anymore. Because look at it, he says, “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit keep yourselves in the love of God.” So the keeping of ourselves within the love of God is with the full understanding of the necessity of prayer in the Holy Spirit, that is, for the Lord's enablement of us as we seek to carry out our responsibility. So, we're not to feel ourselves muzzled and gagged when we preach practical precepts because we believe comforting doctrines of the grace of God. Both of these are true, and we believe that when we, in God's strength and God's grace, seek to carry out the responsibilities that we have in the word of God that we may expect that the Lord God will enable us and work through us to glorify his name. So, keep yourselves in the love of God.

Incidentally this does not mean that we are to keep ourselves where God can love us. His love is unsought. It's undeserved. It's unconditional. The little boy in the Sunday school class who said, “Teacher does God love naughty boys?” And received the answer, “No, certainly not.” That teacher was really blasphemous in her response. We can never put ourselves as believers beyond the

love of God and that’s why Jude writes his epistle. In the 3rd verse he says, “Beloved,” those who have been loved and are being loved. The construction will make that point, “Beloved.” So they are beloved, and they are simply asked to keep themselves by the power of the Holy Spirit and through prayer from everything contrary. “Grieve not in the Holy Spirit of God,” the Lord Jesus said, “Abide in my love.” That’s what it means, to remain in the love of God, avoid that things that are contrary to it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't follow the actions of a Cain or a Balaam or a Korah which reveal that you don't really belong to him.

How is it done? He tells us even how it is done. There are three constructions that define that statement, “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” First, “Building yourselves up on your most holy faith,” verse 20, you can only build yourself up for the keeping of ourselves in the love of God by the apostolic doctrine. The early church continued in the apostle’s doctrine and in fellowship of breaking of bread and prayers, those three things, not four. They continued in the apostle’s doctrine, first of all, first and foremost, the teaching of the apostles. And then secondly, in fellowship, but the fellowship is not the fellowship of a social meeting such as we shall have Saturday night here in our Christmas party, nothing against that, I hope you’ll come, I hope you’ll enjoy it, I expect to be there myself, but when he says in fellowship, it’s defined by the two words that follow in the original text, the fellowship of the breaking of bread and prayers. There are three things here that marked the early church. They continued in the apostle’s teaching. They continued in the observance of the Lord’s Supper, and they continued in prayer, prayer in the spirit. So, “Building yourselves up in the faith,” praying in the Holy Spirit.”

And incidentally, this is not praying in tongues. But it’s praying in the spirit. The office of the spirit is to make real to me the interpretation of his word. My plans, my thoughts are to be tested by the word of God. We pray in the spirit when we pray accordingly. Now you can pray and not necessarily pray in the spirit. You can pray by forms that you have learned which you simply repeat time after time. You can pray hastily. You can pray in which the prayers are not going any higher than your own head. There are many people who pray like that unfortunately.

And I must confess that I have often prayed that way too. I have got down by the side of my bed, and I am ashamed to admit that my body was on my knees, but my prayers were anywhere but towards heaven. Often I have gotten upon my knees in the proper position to pray, and then thought about a lot of things that didn't have anything to do with prayer at all and finally have to bring myself back to it. I must say that I interacted with a great deal that Mr. Spurgeon said because he used to say that you can get down upon your knees, and then while your down upon your knees and you start praying, you begin to think I'm really getting ahead in the Christian life, am I not? I'm doing a whole lot better than brother so and so and sister so and so. And he said that's just like a buzzard flying across the sky as you are praying and you have to confess the sin in the midst of your prayers. It's possible to sin in your praying in effect. So what he is talking about is praying in the Holy Spirit, in harmony with the spirit and the word of God.

And then he says, “Waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life,” a hope concerning the Second Advent. We look for mercy. We look for mercy initially when we came to faith in him. We look for mercy day by day from the Lord God, and we look for mercy in the future at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ when the divine promises reach their culmination in our Lord's return.

And the last two verses have to do with the exhortation for us to engage in a work of redemption for eternal life. Convince some who doubt, those whose faith has been shaken by the apostates. Those who look at their TV and find the TV screen a means of turning away from the faith rather than being drawn to the faith, we are to be concerned about those about us, seek to argue them out of their error while they are still of two minds. There is nothing wrong with that, everything right about it. So have mercy upon some. The marginal note says, “Convince some who are doubting.” Don't send them to Coventry, as the British like to say. In other words, don't consign them to eternal hell, but seek to win them to the faith in the love of Christ. But some need to be brought to the knowledge of the fact that their unbelief may lead to eternal death. Have mercy on some who are doubting. Save others, snatching them out of the fire. And on some have mercy

with fear, more seriously affected may need some more energetic action just like Lot who was lingering, was hastened out of the city before the judgment of God fell. It is perfectly all right to speak to people in a sharp way in Christian love, but remind them of eternal judgment. There’s nothing wrong at all with saying to a person, “You, if you continue in the path in which you are going, are going straight to an eternal hellfire.”

Now I want to give you an illustration. This past week, a man in our congregation came in to me to talk with me. We talked for about an hour. I asked him about his spiritual experience. I knew he was a Christian man, but I was interested. He said he grew up in Minnesota I believe, or Wisconsin, Minnesota I think, or maybe it was Wisconsin, in the north. He said he grew up in a Lutheran church, so a Norwegian Lutheran church, because he’s Norwegian background, Norwegian Lutheran church. And he said his life was characterized by anything but what the Scriptures speak about, but he was still a very young man. He said one day he walked into his pastor’s home or office, I’ve forgotten whether it was home or office, and the pastor, a godly man, looked at him and said, and I won’t use his real name, you might know him, he’ll tell you about it anyway. If you got to know him he would have told you anyway. But he said, “Frank you’re going straight to hell.” And then the pastor after a short wait said, “But we can do something about that.” And then he gave him the gospel. And he gave him the gospel, and he responded to it, and he said, “You know, I floated out of his room by the joy of getting saved,” because he was warned, and warned frankly. And in God’s marvelous grace he responded and he’s an effective witness for our Lord Jesus Christ today, maybe. Pardon me if you’re in the audience, my judgment of your age maybe sixty years later.

So, on some, have mercy with fear, danger to the sinner, danger to the one who would rescue him if we don’t express the love of God in seeking to win men to Christ. So our time is up. Jude makes it very plain that men today are lost. The church is traveling in many cases the apostasy road and it dead-ends in perdition. But there is a way of escape. Something can be done about it. In the benediction one gets the clue. We’ll talk about this next week, but now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory blameless with great joy

to the only God our savior through Jesus Christ, our savior through Jesus Christ. There is no salvation apart from Christ. Salvation is through Jesus Christ, through his atoning work. It's through his atoning work that our sins are paid for. It's through that saving, death, burial and resurrection that we are offered life and it's through our Lord Jesus Christ that you may have life, that you may have the assurance of life everlasting. And there is no other way. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. The savior, and the salvation, is through Jesus Christ.

May God in his marvelous grace give us spiritual wisdom. Give us the incentive to study the Scriptures. To listen carefully to what they say and not what the many ruckus voices around us claiming to be Christian are saying. But pay attention to the word of God. Give yourself as the early church did to the apostle's doctrine. May God help us to do that. Let's stand for the benediction. We remind you if you're here today and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ that you are lost, and you're heading for a Christless eternity. May God in his marvelous grace touch you, cause you to turn to the Lord Jesus, receive him as your own personal savior.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the promises of the word of God. We are so thankful for what has been given to us in grace, the knowledge of Christ as our redeemer, our representative, and our covenantal head. And we thank Thee, Lord, for those words of exhortation which point out our responsibility as Christians to effectively represent him. Help us Lord to do that. If there are some Lord here who have never believed in Christ, may they at this moment turn to Thee...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]