Weekly Devotionals from Pastor Lyle Wahl

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Keep yourselves in the love of God



We are so thankful that God loved us and sent His Son to be our Savior.

> "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

We also are thankful that when we received Christ God poured out His love to the core of our being.

> "the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
>
> (Romans 5:5)

We have the responsibility to choose to, and actually live in tune with God and His love. Jesus has told us in John chapter 15, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love." What did He mean, and how do we do that? Jesus went on to explain, "If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love" (9-10). True love for Him is evidenced by obeying Him.

Let's turn to another passage which helps us, the short letter of Jude. Jude warns about certain people who have crept in with false teaching and sinful actions. In contrast, believers are to be

> "building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 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" (21-23).

The key phrase for us today is "keep yourselves in the love of God." Keep yourselves in the sphere of, the center of God's love for you. Jesus has told us to obey Him. Jude here fleshes that out with some practical steps.

- We have the responsibility to build ourselves up in our "most holy faith." Yes, God is the One who strengthens and builds us up, but we have a responsibility. When he writes, "on your most holy faith", he is speaking of the truth God has given us. Remember Paul's familiar words, Scripture is "inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable,

equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16). To build ourselves up we must be reading, applying, living God's Word.

- Then Jude directs us to be "praying in the Holy Spirit." As we highlighted in the last sermon in the series on Ephesians, praying in the Holy spirit means to pray with the guidance, support and power of the Holy Spirit rather than praying on our own. Remember those beautiful, reassuring words God gave us through the Apostle Paul,

  > "Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

- Next, Jude tells us to be "looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." We keep ourselves in the center of God's love as we expectantly look forward to Christ's return. As the apostle John wrote in chapter 3 of his first letter, "We know that when [Christ] appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope set on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (2b-3).
- As well, we are to "have mercy on some, who are doubting." It is sadly sometimes true that, as it has been said, "The Christian army is the only army that shoots and buries its wounded." Remember Paul's instructions that open chapter 6 in his letter to the Galatian churches, "Brothers and sisters, even if a person is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual are to restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you are not tempted as well."
- One more part of our responsibility to keep in the love of God, Jude tells us, is "save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." We are not to overlook or condone sin. But since God in His love sent His Son into the world to save people, and Christ has commissioned us to be witnesses of Him and the gospel, His love flowing through us, controlling us, will lead us to actively reach out to those who do not know him.

Surveys tell us that the things that rank highest on what people around the world are into, keep into, are listening to music, watching movies, and reading books. Number one for us should be keeping ourselves in God's love. How are you doing?

