

Defending and Advancing the Gospel

The story is told of an old lady who rented a cottage, which also had a dog, for the summer. The old lady liked a very comfortable armchair more than any other in the house. She always headed for it the first thing in the morning. But, she always found the chair occupied by the dog. Being afraid of the dog, she never dared tell it harshly to get out of the chair, but instead she would go to the window and shout "Cats!" Then the dog would rush to the window and bark, and the old lady would slip quietly into the vacant chair.

One day the dog entered the room and found the old lady sitting on the chair. He strolled over to the window, and looking out, started barking a lot. The old lady got up and ran to the window to see what the dog was barking at, and the dog quietly climbed onto the chair.

Deceit practiced on others will sooner or later be repaid against ourselves.

"Bread of a deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel" (Prov. 20:17).

Jude 1 – 4; 17 – 25

1) Defending the Faith

- Jude was eager to write about the salvation we share, but changed his subject to contending for the faith.
- The faith was entrusted to the saints – the Christians
 - We are responsible for what we have been entrusted with
 - If someone is desecrating the faith it is our responsibility to defend it
 - We are responsible to walk in it
 - We are responsible to promote and advance it
- The reason that Jude wrote this is that people had already started desecrating the faith then
 - They change the grace of God into a license for immorality
 - Romans 6: 1 – 4 "What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."
 - They deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord
 - We can deny Jesus in many ways:
 - Deny His divinity and believe that He was only a man – not more than a Prophet
 - Deny that He came in the flesh – Gnosticism
 - Deny His work on the cross for the salvation of all mankind
 - Deny His Lordship over our lives
 - Deny that we know Him
 - They are scoffers who follow ungodly desires
 - 2 Peter 3: 3 – 4 "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."
 - They bring division in the church
 - They follow their natural instincts and do not have the Spirit
 - 1 Corinthians 2: 14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned"
- 1 Timothy 6: 12 "Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."

2) Build yourselves up in the Faith

- We need to keep strengthening our faith
 - Faith that is not strengthened grows weak and easily distracted from the path that the Lord would want us to walk.
 - The Israelites walked out of Egypt with great faith yet doubted when they were confronted with the obstacles of entering the Promised Land.
 - Someone whose faith is weak is easily misled by those whom we have already mentioned
 - We build ourselves up in the faith by:
 - Praying in the Holy Spirit
 - Knowing the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3: 15)
 - Trusting God by acting on His Word (Proverbs 3: 5 – 6)
 - Looking back in our lives and acknowledge God's faithfulness (Deuteronomy)
 - Reading about men and women of faith (Hebrews 11)
- Keep yourselves in the love of God
 - Romans 8: 37 – 39 tells us that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus so why should we keep ourselves in His love?
 - Nothing that we do will ever make Him stop loving us but it is our love for Him that grows cold and needs to be constantly nurtured.

3) Advancing the Faith

- Advancing the faith can mean within the church as well as reaching out to unbelievers.
- There may be doubters in the church who are weak in faith. Instead of judging them we ought to be merciful and patient with them.
 - Romans 14: 1 "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters"
 - We also show mercy by explaining the Word of God to them that they may not follow the ways of the world and be lost.
- We advance the faith by preaching the Gospel to unbelievers
 - Romans 10: 14 "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"
- When we show mercy do so with the fear of God
 - Some are so merciful that they tolerate sinfulness
 - Others start accepting other religions as another way to God
 - True mercy is found at the cross of Christ
- The consequences of advancing the faith is that we will save people from the fire of hell.

4) Being kept in the Faith

- The good news is that it is not all up to us to keep ourselves in the faith.
- We are kept by Jesus Christ (v.1)
- Jude 24 – 25 "To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen."