

Guard Yourselves

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 4th, 2011 • Pastor Chris Lankford

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

~Jude 20-21 (NASB)

1) Remember The Words

- A) In the face of imposters which have infiltrated the church with dangerous/deadly teachings and practices (Jude 5-16), Jude calls on true followers of Jesus Christ (the “beloved,” (that’s you and me) Jude 17) to remember God’s Word!
- B) Jude calls on God’s people (that’s you and me) to master Jesus Christ’s teachings, which have come through the apostles (Scripture), and are instructive for countering the heretics, who mock Jesus and His church (Jude 17-18).
- C) These are the heretics (already exposed in Jude 8, 10, 12-13, and 16) who are now further exposed as “the ones who cause divisions” (political divisions); “worldly-minded” (earthly wisdom); and most significantly “devoid of the Spirit” (lit., not having the Spirit).
- D) Each description (Jude 19) is meant to evoke a visceral, earthy, natural, physical type of word-picture. These are not people of Spirit, but people of flesh!

2) The Trinitarian Life Of The Beloved

- A) Once again, Jude affectionately appeals to the “beloved” (Jude 20) in growing in their “most holy faith” which has come through the words of the Scriptures.
- B) Unlike the earthly, fleshly, natural teaching of the heretics, God’s beloved (that’s you and me) are to “pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20). Instead of praying our own checklist of requests, we are to pray from the Word of God for His desires for our lives, and to do so dependent “in the Spirit” for both help and direction (Romans 8:26-27).
- C) Unlike the earthly, fleshly, natural teaching of the heretics, God’s beloved (that’s you and me) are to “keep/guard ourselves in God’s love” (Jude 21a). Instead of loving out of response to how we are treated, we love because God has first loved us (1st John 4:7-11). The love of God, both received and delivered to others, guards us for Christ!
- D) Unlike the earthly, fleshly, natural teaching of the heretics, God’s beloved (that’s you and me) are to “excitedly anticipate Jesus Christ’s mercy for eternal life” (Jude 21b). Instead of anticipating the great things of our earthly life (status, possessions, wealth), we are to “seek first the Kingdom of God” and leave the rest of the details up to Jesus (Matthew 6:33-34)!

3) Aggressively Pursue The Backslidden

- A) In a triad of illustrations (Jude 22-23), we are called to forcefully pursue those who have fallen away, with mercy and fear of their polluting sin. Each illustration is meant to restore the backslidden, showing God’s merciful heart.
- B) Finally, in a truly magnificent benediction (blessing) spanning all of history, Jude calls God’s people (that’s you and me) to “stand in the presence” of God, “not stumbling” from the false teaching in this world, but to live a life which is “blameless with great joy” for the “glory and majesty” of God through Jesus Christ (Jude 24-25), from now through all the ages, AMEN (so be it!).