

The Perversion of Grace

Jude 1- 4

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11/17/13

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

- I. Introduction: Today's message is taken from the book of Jude where we will focus primarily on the first 4 verses of this short Epistle.
 - A. Most of the New Testament Epistles have headings such as "The Second Epistle of John" or "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians." But you should note that the book of Jude is titled "The General Epistle of Jude." And this is because it was not written to a church at a specific location but rather was sent generally to the church – to all believers everywhere.
 - B. And in my study I became impressed with the similarity between the heresy of which Jude writes that had already developed within the early church and that which remains and is pervasive in our day within the professing church – that is, among those who consider themselves to be Christians, but who have embraced and promote a false, perverted gospel, a way of salvation that is contrary to God's Gospel of salvation by grace alone as it is set forth in God's word. Sadly, the more popular version of the doctrine often referred to as 'salvation by grace' (the doctrine which is taught and embraced by most professing Christians in our day) is a perversion of grace, just as had surfaced in the day of the Apostle Jude. And so, in keeping with Jude's exhortation to oppose this, I've titled this message "The Perversion of Grace."
 - C. The 1-chapter book of Jude is an exhortation to believers to continue in (and contend for) the faith, the Gospel of God's grace in Christ. To contend for the faith is to stand firm in opposition to the false doctrine of which Jude writes. This requires discernment and understanding. And so a large part of the book describes the methods and practices of unbelievers who would pervert God's gospel. And in delivering this message, he begins by making a stark distinction between those who are saved and those who are lost in the professing church – among those who consider themselves to be Christians. And it's important that we see this (as is often the case in many of the New Testament Epistles) that Jude's Epistle is delineating not just between saved and lost, but between the saved and the lost in the professing church. And we will focus on the striking distinctions made between these 2 groups as found in the first 4 verses of Jude.
 - D. I know there are insincere pretenders who attend various churches for less than noble reasons. Some choose a church for business advantages, others for social reasons. And when that is the case, it usually becomes apparent to others over time, although we can be fooled. But Jude is warning against those who had crept in to their houses of worship, wormed their way in (so to speak) by appearing to be in agreement with God's Gospel of grace, while in reality holding to a perverted notion of grace, another gospel, a false gospel.

E. I'm emphasizing this at the onset because I want everyone who hears this message to strive to objectively hear the distinctions that God makes through the Apostle Jude. This general Epistle is just as relevant to our day so let's examine ourselves by these descriptions so as to test whether our faith is valid, true God-given faith, or not.

Now this is easier said than done because no one hearing this message will do so while thinking they believe a false gospel. So let's set aside any preconceived judgments and consider afresh what God's Word has to say. May we open our minds to hear from God with the attitude of the Psalmist who wrote, "***Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.***" (Psalm 139:23-24). Let's make that our sincere prayer today.

II. Verse 1: Now Jude is writing to those who are saved – true, genuine believers in the professing church. And they are described as the book opens in verse 1 where we read, "***Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:***" He is writing to the saints – the sanctified ones. I know in my former spiritual darkness, I would read passages like this and conclude it was written to me because it is describing the saved and I thought that included me. But I was reading someone else's mail as I glossed over this description of those who are saved because I didn't believe the description to be true of me. And we see that in the very first phrase where believers are described as those who are "...***sanctified by God the Father.***"

A. Sanctified by God the Father: Here in verse 1 we see the work of the Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And he begins with the sanctification of all true believers by God the Father.

1. To be sanctified means to be set apart. The saints (all true believers) are sanctified. In some contexts the word "sanctified" means to be made holy. And if you consider Ephesians 1 we can see where both could be applied to the saints, although clearly Jude verse 1 is a more direct reference to God having chosen or elected (set apart) a people in Christ from before the world began. Look at that with me in Ephesians 1, beginning in verse 3 where Paul writes to the saints at Ephesus, "***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:***" In I Peter 2:9, Peter refers to the saints as "...***a chosen generation.***"

2. So true believers to whom Jude's general Epistle is directed are 1st identified as those chosen by God the Father in Christ from before the foundation of the world – chosen, set apart, sanctified by God the Father.

B. Preserved in Jesus Christ: Secondly, believers are described in Jude 1 as those blessed by God the Son as it reads that they are “...*preserved in Jesus Christ.*”

1. And this preservation in Christ didn't just begin when we came to believe God's Gospel. Just as God's elect were chosen in Christ before the world began, they have always had an inseparable grace union with Christ whereby they have been (and shall continue to be) preserved in Him – and that from all eternity and for all eternity. God saw His elect in Christ (represented by and one with Him) even before they fell with the rest of humanity in their common representative, Adam. But the elect never fell out of their union with Christ for they are eternally united to Christ and thereby eternally preserved.

And by God's design, having fallen with the entire human race in Adam, God is glorified in the subsequent redemption of His elect – a redemption necessary because of Adam's fall – all in keeping with God's infinitely wise eternal purpose and will. God's elect were ruined by the fall with the rest of humanity in order that they, unlike others, might be preserved by Christ's redeeming work on the cross – His blood payment due unto the Father's holy justice for their sin. In order that God might receive all glory, God's elect continue to be preserved so as to experience and enjoy (in their respective lifetimes) all the privileges of grace derived from that everlasting covenant of grace made between the triune Godhead. God's elect were preserved in Christ before being called to Christ in belief of the gospel.

2. A few weeks back Jim put an excellent article in our church's bulletin. It was written in the 19th century by J.C. Philpot. And I want to share what he had to say in commenting on this 1st verse of Jude. He wrote...

“What a mercy it is for God's people that before they have a 'vital union' with Christ—before they are grafted into Him experimentally <meaning before they came to know of their union> —they have an 'eternal, immanent union' with Him...” He goes on to say, “It is by virtue of this eternal union that they come into the world—at such a time, at such a place, from such parents, under such circumstances—as God has appointed.

It is by virtue of this eternal union that the circumstances of their lives are ordained. By virtue of this eternal union they are preserved in Christ before they are effectually called. They cannot die until God has brought about a vital experimental <or experiential> union with Christ! Whatever *sickness* they may pass through—whatever *injuries* they may be exposed to—whatever *perils* assault them on sea or land—*die they will not, die they cannot*—until God's purposes are executed in bringing them into a vital union with the Son of His love.

Thus, this eternal union watched over every circumstance of their birth—watched over their childhood—watched over their manhood <or adulthood> —watched over them until the appointed time and spot, when "the God of all grace," according to His eternal purpose, was pleased to quicken their souls, and thus bring about an experimental <or experiential> union with the Lord of life and glory.”

3. Now there should be no doubt if they were so preserved in Christ from eternity past that there existed no possibility of His not having come in time to die for their sins, no possibility that they would not be preserved until they were conceived and subsequently called to Christ in belief of God's Gospel of grace – then it is likewise certain and sure that they will be preserved until grace sees them in heaven's eternal glory – forever preserved, from eternity past to eternity future.
4. Think about that. You believers, rejoice in your future certainty as you look back and marvel at how the Lord ordered the events of your lives to bring you to a place such as this to hear and cause you to embrace this glorious Gospel of grace. What a blessing is found in that phrase, "preserved in Jesus Christ."
5. So true believers to whom Jude's general Epistle is directed are identified (1) as those chosen by God the Father in Christ from before the foundation of the world – chosen, set apart, sanctified by God the Father and (2) as those preserved (from eternity to eternity) in Jesus Christ.

C. Called by the Holy Spirit: Thirdly, believers are described in Jude 1 as those blessed by God the Holy Spirit as it reads that they are "...called." Now Jude doesn't add the name of the Holy Spirit here but we know that is implied because from other scripture we know it is the Holy Spirit who calls sinners from spiritual darkness to light – the light of the Gospel of God's grace.

1. Paul spoke of this work of the Spirit (as well as all 3 persons of the Godhead) when he wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, "***But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation <sanctified by God the Father> through sanctification of the Spirit <now speaking of being set apart in regeneration and conversion, being saved through sanctification of the Spirit...>and belief of the truth: ¹⁴Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.***" Believers are called by God the Holy Spirit to believe God's Gospel of grace by the blood-bought gift of faith purchased for them by Christ in whom they are preserved all the way to final glory.
2. Consider the blessing of the Holy Spirit's calling of God's elect in this light: remember that until that takes place in God's appointed time that none of the eternally blessed children of God have any apprehension of the love of God the Father in election, or the grace of God the Son in redemption by which they've have been preserved. So believers rejoice in having been so enlightened by the Gospel call of the Holy Spirit.

D. Sanctified, Preserved, Called: So all true believers to whom Jude's general Epistle is directed are identified (1) as those chosen by God the Father in Christ from before the foundation of the world – chosen, set apart, sanctified by God the Father and (2) as those preserved (from eternity to eternity) in Jesus Christ, and (3) as those irresistibly called by the Holy Spirit by means of the preached gospel of God's grace in Christ.

That means if you're one of the saints described by God through His apostle Jude, you'll have no problem with being sanctified, preserved, and called. These descriptions are reserved for the saints and describe only them and each and every one of them – those who shall, without fail, inherit heaven's eternal glory by God's grace in Christ.

1. If you're a believer then, you'll have no problem with the glorious doctrine of election. You need it if you've come to see your true need for salvation by grace because grace necessitates election. If salvation isn't totally of God, then it must be owing to something you, the other party, can merit, at least in part. And that's not unmerited favor. That's not salvation by grace. Many call it grace but don't be deceived. That's salvation by works and God won't have it!
2. Secondly, if you're a believer then, you'll have no problem with the doctrine of eternal preservation of the saints. You'll believe once saved, always saved because true believers know that all the conditions for their salvation were fully met by the eternally immutable (unchangeable) Son of God in whom they are preserved.
3. Thirdly, if you're a believer, then you'll have no problem with the calling of the Holy Spirit. You'll believe in the doctrine of His effectual, invincible, irresistible calling as you come to see by the light of God's gospel that you were in times past spiritually dead, in spiritual darkness. And thereby recognize you never would have come to believe the Gospel on your own. You truly need God's mercy and grace – His electing grace, His preserving grace, His grace in His effectual call to believe God's gospel of grace.
 - (a) You'll believe Christ as He said in John 6:44: ***“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”***
 - (b) You will realize you must have been called, that your salvation cannot be a product of your free will decision. A believer believes God as He spoke through the Apostle Paul saying, ***“... it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”***(Romans 9:16).

- III. Verse 2: Now back to Jude, as we move to verse 2, Jude expresses his desire that the resulting graces from their sanctification, preservation, and calling be multiplied as he writes, ***“Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.”*** (Jude 2). Those who are truly saved among the professors of Christianity are recipients of God's mercy, peace, and love. Jude's desire that these graces be multiplied is an expression of his desire that they have an expanding view and growing appreciation of their being so blessed, multiplied with fresh applications as they attend to the God-appointed means for growth in grace and knowledge of Him.
- A. We worship one God who subsists in 3 Persons, but all of one mind and essence. And truly God in His 3-fold character of Persons, is the fountain of all mercy, peace, and love. But it's interesting to consider how these are fruits and effects of the glorious acts of grace Jude had mentioned in the previous verse – fruits and effect that every true believer experiences.

- B. Consider the mercy from God the Father. It's not mercy if you presume to do something to save yourself. But oh what mercy we behold when we see the source of our salvation having originated from God having chosen us in the election of grace so as to show mercy on us, unworthy and undeserving as we all are. If you ever truly see your unworthiness to be saved, then and only then do you see you truly need God's mercy.
- C. Consider the peace made between God and His elect, all those He saves, by the redeeming work of God the Son. God's Word tells us that Christ's work of reconciliation finds true believers as holy and unreprouvable before God, having the merit of the very righteousness of God which Christ established for them imputed or charged to their accounts, just as their sins were imputed or charged to Him that He might pay the debt due to God's justice that would find them accepted in Him.
- D. Lastly, consider the love shed abroad in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit as He makes these blessing known to us that we might rejoice in them. The Spirit directs our hearts into the love of God. The bible teaches that the Spirit directs God's people to Christ and therein we experience the love of God. As we read in I John 4:10, "***Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***" God doesn't love us because we chose to love Him first. That's backwards. As verse 19 of that same chapter declares, "***We love him, because he first loved us.***"

So in these 1st 2 verses of Jude we have a description of true believers and of the fruit and effects of their salvation. Now when we get to verse 4, we are going to see a description of others who profess Christ, but we will see a sharp contrast with the description of the saints. Verse 4 describes those who actually embrace a false gospel – a perversion of grace. But in transitioning to verse 4, Jude writes in verse 3...

IV. Verse 3: ***Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.***

- A. It would appear that Jude may have had in mind following a course similar to the other Apostles, expounding further on the same or common salvation spoken of in other Epistles, but that perhaps Jude, being the penman, was overruled by the real Author, God the Holy Spirit – led instead to bring before the church the differences between God's chosen and the reprobates who had infiltrated their ranks. And so his message becomes an exhortation to contend for the faith – that is to stand firm against anything that would oppose the faith – the Gospel of God's grace in which they believed.
- B. It's noteworthy that he called it "the common salvation." It's "common," not as in plain, but as in same. All who are saved have a common salvation – saved the same way in accordance with God's one Gospel – one way of salvation. We see this clearly as Christ is quoted in John 14:6 saying, "***...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***" It's also noteworthy that the Gospel doctrine, referred to as "the faith" is described as the same one said to be "delivered unto the saints," referring to the Old Testament saints. One Gospel – one common way of salvation!

- V. Verse 4: And then in verse 4 Jude writes, “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Here we have described others who profess to be Christians, not the saved to whom Jude is writing, but those described as certain men who had “crept in unawares.” So let’s delve into this.
- A. First we can know Jude isn’t talking about every lost sinner. This is not a description of those who make no pretense of believing on Christ and a way of salvation according to grace. Rather he is speaking of those who had infiltrated the professing church, even at this early stage (believed to 30 years or less since the death and resurrection of Christ and the beginning of the church age). In 2 Corinthians 11 we read of such and see how they could creep in under the radar as Paul described those ministers who would transform themselves into ministers of righteousness (appearing to be resting in Christ and His righteousness alone and so appearing to believe salvation by grace and not by their own merit – not a righteousness of their own doing). But yet as John wrote, these could not truly abide (continue) in the doctrine of Christ, the gospel wherein Christ’s righteousness is revealed. Elsewhere the scripture would describe these who had crept in as the tares among the wheat.
- B. Now if time allowed for us to read the entire book, you would see in verses 11-13 that Jude compares these false professors to different known characters from history such as Korah and Balaam (vs. 11), men of renown in their congregations but who were exposed for what they were, described by Jude like clouds without water that are carried by the wind, described as trees without fruit, twice dead – (1) spiritually dead from the representative of all humanity (Adam) and (2) under the sentence of the second death (vs. 12), “wandering stars” like a falling star that blazes for a while but of whom Jude says “is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (vs. 13).
- C. Through Jude, God pronounces that the same tragic end is reserved for the false professors described in verse 4, saying that they “...*were before of old ordained to this condemnation.*” Here’s the contrast for us to consider. From verse 1, we know some are ordained unto life, sanctified in God’s eternal election but these were ordained to condemnation. Jude here acknowledges God’s sovereignty in salvation. He describes those who never will identify with the descriptions of the saved from verse 1. This does not make God the villain simply because He leaves them (these religious people who profess to believe on Christ) to their own spiritually dead appetites – their own perversion of grace (as we’re about to see) whereby they simply follow the desires of their wicked hearts, the Bible’s description of the heart we’re all born with.
- D. He also describes them as “ungodly men.” Now this is not an accusation that they were immoral. Had that been the case, they would have fooled no one. These crept into their houses of worship unawares. And so we know that they are ungodly in the sense that they opposed God as He is uniquely revealed in God’s Gospel of grace in Christ. Again, that’s where we all start out as spiritually dead sinners, at enmity with God.

- E. And then Jude tells us how they might be identified, describing them as those who turn “...*the grace of our God into lasciviousness*,...” The word translated “lasciviousness” refers to any unlawful desire. Lascivious behavior indulges our sinful desires and may be used to describe outrageous, immoral conduct, indecency, living with no restraints on our conduct. And so how do they turn the grace of God into that?
1. First, know that none can turn God’s grace (His love and favor or the principle of grace) into something it is not. So this is not speaking of the principle of grace but rather the Gospel doctrine of grace. Now I used to think this phrase referred to those who would seem to embrace the doctrine of grace – the doctrine which renounces any notion that my salvation is conditioned in any way on the things I do or refrain from doing – but who do so in order to justify fulfilling their unlawful desires, by abusing their presumed freedom in Christ and using that as an excuse or license to sin. And certainly that would expose someone to be a false professor, one who has no regard for obeying God’s clear revealed will as it concerns our conduct.
 2. But I wasn’t settled with that understanding because of this: One who openly lusts after the flesh (whether physically or spiritually in an overt belief of salvation by works) – neither would fool a true Christian for very long. And an outrageously immoral person doesn’t fool any true Christian. That isn’t even embraced by many (if any) of the lost among the professing church. So how could it be properly understood that they crept in unawares (under the radar) if they were using grace as a license to fulfill their own sinful appetites? And then I went to Robert Hawker’s commentary on this verse which I now believe captures the truth of this passage. If you want to study the entire book on your own, I highly recommend his commentary. And if you do read it, you will see I have unashamedly borrowed liberally from him in preparing this sermon.
 3. This verse teaches that these ungodly men (remember: ungodly in that they opposed the truths of God and His Gospel) held the view that the doctrine of salvation by the free and sovereign grace of God would lead to lasciviousness. And so they deny that salvation is truly by God’s sovereign grace in Christ alone, charging that could not be true because of their belief that it would inevitably open the flood-gates of sin.
 4. There we find the similarity with the heresy of our day in which so many who profess to believe salvation by grace object, “Why if I believed like you do – meaning God’s true Gospel of grace, His plan of salvation in which by His infinite wisdom He determined to pardon sinners of His own choosing, freely, fully, and completely on the sole basis of Jesus’ obedience unto death in their place, based solely on His blood and righteousness – Why, if I believed that I’d just live like the devil. I would have no reason to live an upright and moral life.” Now I don’t know any professing “Christian” who really believes that we should not strive to obey God’s revealed will as set forth in the scripture. Instead, this is a product of our natural inclination to cling to the idea that something we do or refrain from doing makes the real difference in our salvation – not Christ alone.

They may say it is by grace, BUT (there is always a “but”) – but you’ve got to believe, you’ve got to accept Christ, you’ve got to confess Him, but you’ve got to do something in order to save yourself. So they refuse to believe that salvation is totally conditioned on Christ alone. Instead they turn the doctrine of God’s grace into a licentious doctrine and thereby deny the true gospel in their determination to cling to their version of grace – a perversion of grace. But listen, if your salvation is determined by your decision or anything found in you or proceeding from you, rather than seeing all of salvation’s conditions having been met by Christ alone, then you can call that ‘salvation by grace’ to the cows come home – but that’s not what God calls grace and that’s not God’s Gospel – His way of salvation in Christ who is the (singular) way!

5. And unless and until the Spirit calls us by God’s gospel of grace, we all will naturally imagine the same. We’re all born with a natural conscience which tells us it is wrong to live an outrageously immoral life. Our problem lies in our self-love which has us unable to see a valid motive for seeking God and obeying God if salvation is truly and entirely “of the Lord,” truly out of our hands. In our self-love, we can’t imagine being motivated to obedience if we don’t get something in return. Apart from the new birth, we just can’t see why someone would forego the sinful indulgences of our fleshly desires if our behavior doesn’t influence our being eternally blessed. Apart from God’s grace, we just can’t fully enter into the true believer’s Spirit-given motivation to obey God out of grace and gratitude as recipients of His mercy and grace. That doesn’t compute with our determination to cling to controlling our own eternal destiny. In spiritual blindness we’re prone to think God will love us if (or because) we first love Him. But as we read, God says it’s the other way around.

F. Now notice that in turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, that Jude says they thereby deny “...*the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” How could this be said of them unless it is because their “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness” equated to a denial of God’s gospel of salvation by grace – of His free and sovereign grace in Christ alone? As Mr. Hawker explains, if their profession was in the “Christian” church, they could not be denying the existence or Being of God or the Being of Christ.

But like the false professors of our day, while not denying God’s existence, they indeed deny the Lord when they deny the efficacy of the shed blood and justice-satisfying righteousness of Jesus Christ to save each and everyone for whom it was rendered. To deny that Christ fully accomplished what He was sent (and willingly agreed) to do, to save His people from their sins, treats His precious shed blood as ineffective, even worthless if He failed to redeem even one for whom He lived and died. That denies the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. Comparison of the Saved and Lost in the Professing Church: Now as I asked at the onset, let's prayerfully consider our own state in light of Jude's stark contrast between the saved and the lost found within the professing Christian church. I pray that God will deliver others just as He once did me from my blindness to see how I unwittingly once embraced a false gospel that actually denied the Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ – a gospel that scorned God's free and sovereign grace in Christ as a doctrine of lasciviousness. Consider how many (just as I once did) turn God's grace into lasciviousness by contrasting them to Jude's description of the saints. They do so...

- A. ...in their rejection of the doctrine of election. The true believer is described as God's elect, sanctified by the Father (from before the world began as we read in Ephesians 1). And yet those who object to election object to salvation by God's free and sovereign grace. They object saying, "If I'm truly at the mercy of God (if as you say, Christ died only for His elect but not others) then there is no motive for me to even seek to know God. I might as well eat, drink, and be merry and forget about it." And yet many talk much about being thankful for God's mercy and grace while at the same time revolting at the notion they really are at His mercy. If you can make a decision for Jesus (or do anything) that will result in your being saved, then you don't need God's mercy. You just need to do whatever your religion prescribes is required of you. And so mercy will not be multiplied as a grace from God in their hearts, for they've yet to learn of and receive God's mercy – not while refusing to submit to the sovereignty of God in salvation, not while ignorant of their desperate need for God's mercy and grace. A grace that is absent can't be multiplied.
- B. Secondly, whereas the true believer is eternally preserved in Christ based upon Christ's substitutionary, peace-making, finished work of redemption on the cross; in contrast, the lost among the professing church deny free grace in their presumption that they can make their own peace with God by something they do – perhaps their sincere religious interest, their good character, or their so-called free will choice or decision for Jesus. And so peace will not be multiplied as a grace from God in their hearts, for they know nothing of the peace of God which Christ alone established for His people.
- C. Thirdly, whereas the true believer is said to have been effectually drawn by God through the calling of the Holy Spirit to believe God's Gospel of free and sovereign grace; in contrast, the lost among the professing church turn that doctrine into lasciviousness, suggesting it can't be true or else we would have a license to sin. The Holy Spirit says of those He calls that they love Him because He first loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation, the sin-bearing, justice-satisfying sacrifice for their sins. But the false professor insists that his or her favor with God is because of their choice. In essence, they believe God loves them because of the loveliness He finds in their having chosen to love Him first. Quite a contrast is it not? To which camp do you belong?

VII. Closing:

In closing let's look at one final distinguishing characteristic of those who are saved. In verse 19, Jude makes note of how Jesus had told them there would be mockers among them. And then he says to them in verse 20, "***But ye, beloved,*** <speaking to the brethren, true believers> ***building up yourselves on your most holy faith,*** <i.e. – the body of faith, growing in grace and knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel of grace> ***praying in the Holy Ghost,*** ²¹***Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life***"

How are they to keep themselves in the love of God? By "...***looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.***" So this looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life is compatible with what we read in I John 4:10, "***Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***" Propitiation is the same word translated elsewhere as mercy seat – where mercy is found, God's wrath appeased by Christ's offering of Himself for the sins of His elect. We keep ourselves in the love of God from the perspective of I John 4:19 as we read, "***We love him, because he first loved us.***"

Do you see your desperate need for God's mercy and grace? Do you look exclusively to the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ for your eternal life? The sanctified, preserved and called do and unto them Jude writes, "***Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.***" Be found among these. Cast aside and repent of any perversion of grace and join the mercy beggars, the sanctified, preserved, and called, needing and finding mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself – the Bible.