

The Command to Persevere – Part 2

Introduction

a. objectives

1. subject – Jude commands the church to persevere in the face of false teachers in true faith
2. aim – to cause us to persevere by building up our faith and helping others to do the same
3. passage – Jude 17-23

b. outline

1. The Reality of Scoffers (Jude 17-19)
2. The Command to Persevere (Jude 20-21)
3. The Need to Help Others (Jude 22-23)

c. opening

1. the command to **persevere**
 - a. **remember:** Jude had indicated at the outset (**v. 3**) that he had *intended* to write a letter about some element of our “*common salvation*” ...
 - b. **instead:** he “*found it necessary*” to write of the need to “*contend*” for the faith
 - c. so, what does it mean for the church (believers) to “*contend for the faith?*”
 1. **aspect #1:** to contend for the faith is to *know what we believe and why we believe it*
 2. **aspect #2:** to contend for the faith is to *fight for orthodoxy in all believers* (and before the world)
 3. **aspect #3:** to contend for the faith is to *live out that faith in a world trying to drive it out of us*
 - a. **i.e.** the *continuing aspect* of contending is to “fight” to live the *ramifications* of that faith
 - b. **i.e.** it is *this aspect* that drives Jude to his imperative ...
 - d. Jude began this imperative section by reminding his audience of the *warnings of the apostles*
 1. **i.e.** they had warned that *scoffers* would arise in the church age
 - a. scoffing at the gospel *from inside the church* – mocking the idea that trusting in Christ by faith means a life of discipline, discipleship, and obedience to his will over all other things
 2. (**now**) Jude will give his **primary imperative: a command to persevere in the true faith (and to help others to do so also) – to persevere in the faith we have received**

II. The Command to Persevere (Jude 20-21)

Content

a. the introduction of the command

1. the next subsection begins as the first: “*but you, beloved ...*” (vs. “*but you must remember, beloved*”)
2. just as the *warning* begins as a *direct address* to the recipients of the letter, so the *imperative* to follow is presented as a *direct address*:
 - a. first, understand the **inherent warning** in the gospel: the apostles (and Jesus) warned of scoffers coming from amongst you (**e.g.** false teachers; tares amongst the wheat)
 1. inherent = the gospel message of Christ comes with its own “**built-in**” **warnings (see below)**
 - b. now, understand the **inherent requirement** in the gospel: the apostles (and Jesus) demand *perseverance* in the faith (**i.e.** faith as a *steadfast* connection to Christ)
3. **IOW:** Jude’s warning(s) flows into his imperative: the **implication** of the warning is the imperative

b. the structure of the command

1. the structure of the four (4) verbs in the command:
 - a. one at the core (“*keep*”) around which the other three revolve (“*building*”, “*praying*”, “*waiting*”)
 - b. “*keep*” (*tērēō*; **v. aorist** = an action [of the past] that now simply “is”) = guard; watch over; hold
 1. **i.e.** a **state of being** that must be *maintained*; an “action” of the past that results in a *present condition* that must be kept going; to maintain a “steady state” from the past into the future
 2. **ITC:** the *imperative* is for the believer to maintain himself “*in the love of God*” (**see below**)
 - c. “*building*”, “*praying*” and “*waiting*” are all **v. participles** = the *means* or *methods* by which one performs the imperative – they “**orbit**” the imperative as *specific actions* to “complete” it
2. **e.g.** the Great Commission of **Matthew 28:19f**
“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

- a. the *primary imperative* is **(not as commonly “go”, but) “make disciples”**
1. the goal of the Great Commission is not simply to “go out” into the world and proclaim the message to “get people saved”, but to actually create “disciples”
 2. disciples = learners; those who follow the teachings of a master rabbi; those who come under the authority of a teacher, learn his ways, and then go out to emulate him and bring others back
 - a. **IMO:** the term “Christian” is now used by *too many*, even those *clearly not* (e.g. Mormons)
 - b. **IMO:** a better term for a true believer would be a “disciple” (268x) or “follower of Jesus”
 1. **i.e.** someone who actually *follows Jesus*, even unto death itself (Matthew 16:24)
“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’”
- b. the “orbiting” *means* of disciple-making (then) is by “going”, “baptizing”, and “teaching”
1. going = taking the gospel of Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth, going out with it
 2. baptizing = producing *converts* who faithfully testify before the world their allegiance to Jesus
 3. teaching = instructing those converts until they “observe” (i.e. do) all that Jesus commands
- c. **LOW:** just as the Great Commission has a central imperative around which “orbits” a number of specific ways for it to be accomplished, so Jude’s imperative of “keeping” ourselves in the love of God is accomplished by three continuing actions around it (i.e. we keep by ...)
- c. the center of the command**
1. “keep yourselves ...” = the **command to persevere** – the command to “keep” something as true
 - a. **question #1:** what are we to “keep” ourselves in? **answer:** the love of God
 - b. **question #2:** what is the love of God? **answer:** the relationship (of love) established by/with God through faith in Christ – a *new* relationship with God that is *unique* from his relationship to all others
 1. it *can* be said that God loves humanity as a *creature created in his image* (John 3:16)
“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son ...”
 2. but, it *must also* be said that God hates humanity *in rebellion against him* (Psalm 5:5 KJV)
“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.”
 - a. **i.e.** all humanity, although recognized as his special creature, stands under the *present wrath* of God (“is revealed”; Romans 1:18) – all humans are “workers of iniquity”
 - b. **e.g.** it is *utterly wrong* (and unloving!) to say that God loves everyone *just as they are* ...
 3. thus, the “love of God” (Jude 21) *must be a unique form of love* that we must “keep” (i.e. we do *not* need to keep ourselves in the *general* love of God for us as *his Imago Dei*)
 4. so, the “love of God” is the *result* of his grace, whereby he *averts his wrath* from the sinner onto his Son such that the believer in Christ is *freed* from it so God may truly love him (1 John 4:10)
“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 - a. the work of Christ to *satisfy* the wrath of God (in justice) for a people such that they become the *objects* of his love (in mercy) – those that Christ *died for* become the object of his love
 - b. or, **the love of God for his Son** – i.e. those who are “in Christ” (in the **Covenant of Peace**) are loved by the Father *as the overflow of his love for the Son* (Romans 8:38f)
“For I am sure that neither death nor life, ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 2. **a command to persevere in the love of God – to maintain the (saving) relationship we have in God through Christ Jesus by “contending for the faith” which has justified us**
 - a. **question:** does not God *himself* preserve those who belong to him (i.e. John 6:37)?
 1. **i.e.** isn’t it God’s intention (in his decree) to save a people *completely* in his Son and to preserve them through Christ by his Spirit into eternity (i.e. as his *elect*)?
 2. **answer:** absolutely! – God has purposed to preserve a people, but **he has also decreed that they should persevere in the faith he has called them into** – he has purposed them to *exercise* all of the gifts he has given them *in this life* as a function of that preservation
“Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved [his Son], effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end ... whence He still begets and nourisheth in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality ...” (1689 LBCF, chap. 17, para. 1a; emphasis mine)
 - b. **principle: the Christian is preserved by God to persevere in the grace given to him**
 1. perseverance is not a *passive* reaction to God’s love, but an *active* life of faith in him
 2. **note:** the gospel comes with *another* built-in warning (**scoffers, see above**)
 - a. **i.e.** the warnings of *apostasy*, the commands to *test yourselves*, the exhortations to *make your election sure* (e.g. Hebrews 6:4ff; 2 Corinthians. 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10 KJV)
“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, ... and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God ..., and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, ... Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves ... give diligence to make your calling and election sure ...”
 - b. (**again**) Jesus *himself* warned of these things (**Parable of the Seed; Mark 4:3ff**)
 1. the seed that fell on rocky ground or amongst thorns = those who hear *and quickly receive it*, but have no *root of faith* and wither under opposition or worldly pressure
 2. **implication:** be disciples who put down *deep roots* of faith, who can withstand the opposition when it comes, who can *distinguish* true faith from false teaching

- c. the gospel comes to the sinner as both:
 - 1. a revelation of the relationship God has established with his own through faith in his Son
 - a. **i.e.** a *permanent* justification of sinners propitiated from his wrath
 - 2. and, an exhortation to a life of discipleship under Christ by the Spirit (**Ephesians 4:11ff**)
"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children ..."
- 3. **to persevere in the faith is to know (more and more!) the promises God has made to us in Christ, and to live as though we truly believe those promises**
 - a. **faith grows as we encounter more and more truth from the Word – with deeper understanding comes deeper commitment**
 - b. Jude's imperative is to "keep" ourselves in the faith – we will learn how next week ...