

RESCUING THE REBELLIOUS

Jude 23

INTRODUCTION

- The winning of souls is the greatest work that a Christian can be engaged in.
- In our dealings with others, we must be careful not to treat them with partiality – being “respecters of persons” (James 2:1)
- However, we are to relate to others differently according to their spiritual state.
- When it comes to fellow-believers, we are to treat the obedient with united fellowship (Acts 2:46), the disobedient with separation (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15), and the unrepentant as heathen (Matthew 18:17).
- When it comes to evangelising the lost, we are exercise compassion to those who have been led astray into error, gently bringing them to the truth (v.22)
- Others who have made a wilful choice to follow error and lasciviousness need to be treated with more direct and confronting warnings of judgment and hell.
- These have not simply been deluded into error, but have embraced it.
- The further one has gone into apostasy, the more severe and direct our language must be to them.
- They must be told that if they remain where they are, they will be damned for eternity.

I. STRIVE TO CONVINCe THEM WITH FEAR

A. They need to be saved

1. God “will have all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4)

2. Christ came into this world to save sinners (Luke 19:10; 1 Timothy 1:15)
3. There is hope therefore for those who are entrenched in sin and error
4. Only God can save, yet He uses His people as the means by which He brings it (Romans 11:14; 1 Corinthians 9:22; cf. Matthew 16:19)
5. Christians must be in the work of saving sinners

B. They must be saved with fear

1. Some read this as referring to the believer who is evangelising these people, and that he is to do it with fear – not a fear of man, but a fear of God and a fear of being defiled by the flesh (1 Peter 3:15)
2. But it seems rather to refer to the fear that we seek to instil in the heart of this wayward soul who is so close to destruction
3. Such people have no fear of God, judgment or hell (Romans 3:18)
4. They require firmness and severity to alarm them to their state
5. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11; cf. Acts 24:25)
6. In Psalm 19:9, God’s word is described by metonymy as “the fear of the LORD”, because the law of God promotes fear and reverence in those who hear it

II. SNATCH THEM FROM THE CURSED FIRE

A. There is a sense of urgency

1. Salvation must be sought *today* (Proverbs 27:1; 2 Corinthians 6:2)

2. As the angels “laid hold” upon Lot to deliver him from Sodom, so must we lay hold on the hearts of sinners with our pleadings of the gospel (Genesis 19:16)
- B. They must be shown the utter peril they are in
1. Hell is a place of torment (Luke 16:23; Revelation 20:10)
 2. Hell is everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46)
 3. Hell is everlasting, unquenchable fire (Isaiah 33:14; Matthew 25:41; Mark 9:43-44)
 4. Hell is eternal darkness (Jude 7,13)
- C. Sadly, many do not want to be rescued
1. Scorners hate reproof (Proverbs 9:7-8)
 2. Those who refuse reproof shall “suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1)

III. SHUN THE CORRUPTION OF THE FLESH

- A. There is a caution to be observed
1. The people we seek to save are utterly immersed in sin and error
 2. There is a danger to the rescuer that he may become contaminated in his efforts to save them
 3. The soul-winner must “consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1)
 4. Never think that you are immune from falling into gross sin and error (1 Corinthians 10:12)
 5. Take care that in your dealings with unbelievers that *you* are influencing *them*, and not the other way around

6. Those who have a weakness in a certain area should not put themselves in situations with people where they will be tempted
- B. There are some things the Christian must hate
1. The work of them that turn aside (Psalm 101:3)
 2. Every false way (Psalm 119:104,128)
 3. The deeds and doctrine of false teachers (Revelation 2:6,15)
- C. The believer must prepare himself before going into battle
1. We must pray for strength and protection (Matthew 6:13)
 2. We must be watchful (Matthew 26:41; 1 Peter 5:8)
 3. We must know our own weaknesses (James 1:14-15)
 4. We must put on the whole armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)

CONCLUSION

1. We need wisdom to discern which need gentleness and which need the terrors of hell set before them.
2. We need knowledge of Scripture
3. We need perseverance in the face of rejection and opposition from the lost (Galatians 6:9; Daniel 12:3)
4. We need a burden that sees the lost hanging over the precipice of the lake of fire, and resolves to do everything in our power to rescue them