

**December 9, 2017**

***Jude 17-25***

<sup>17</sup>But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>18</sup>for they said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts.” <sup>19</sup>It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions. <sup>20</sup>But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; <sup>21</sup>keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. <sup>22</sup>And have mercy on some who are wavering; <sup>23</sup>save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies.

<sup>24</sup>Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, <sup>25</sup>to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

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Few days exist in the church when the reality and presence of division and strife are not present and noticed. It was true in Jesus’ day as it is true in our day now. The “ungodly” actions we witness each day on the part of co-workers and family members can, and often do, harm our willingness to share the good news of Christ’s soon-to-be-celebrated birth with those who need to hear God’s story. We know that we participate in an active faith, a living faith that leads to the production of fruit but also requires a strong posture of discipleship which combats the divisions and strife we witness in our culture.

This text from Jude contains strong, affirmative words designed to encourage and inspire the church to live out our faith actively before the world and our communities. Followers of Christ are told to “build themselves up” and to “pray in the Spirit” because choosing to enact these practices helps unify Christ’s body, the church—us. Because we understand the importance of making those choices, we are told to look forward to “the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

With that in mind, I wonder: Right now, in what places is God showing you to display mercy on those who are wavering in their faith? In what places is God showing you people you can help “snatch ... out of the fire” by living out this passage?

If we are going to continue to live and work as the church that is called and sustained by God, then even as we wait for the coming Messiah, we do so in a posture of active ministry. It is our calling—and it is our joy to participate in it.

***Prayer***

*Most Holy God, as we continue our Advent journey, we are aware of our role in your evangelizing of the world as we are aware of the places and people you are sending us to—places where there are people who need your grace and mercy. Give us strength to work energetically as we actively share your message. In Christ’s name, Amen.*