

## Last Sunday of the Church Year

Sermon Road Map  
Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Jude 20-25  
November 21, 2021

### Be a family of believers. Watch out for one another.

- Who is Jude addressing here?
  - ♦ *...you, dear friends, continue to build yourselves up in your most holy faith as you keep praying in the Holy Spirit.*
  - ♦ A select group of Christian friends or every beloved brother or sister in Christ?
  - ♦ Listen carefully: *build yourselves up*. Not a *middle* - each one working on self.
  - ♦ Jude is addressing every Christian community (congregation).

### Be a family of believers. Watch out for one another.

- How can Peace be a family of believers when we gather from the 4 winds?
- If we all lived in the same community we could be a family, not Sunday visitors.
- The Holy Spirit is telling us: *Be a family of believers. Watch out for one another.*
- How can we be more of a healthy family to each other?
  - ♦ God made us a family by baptism and our common confession of his word.
  - ♦ Don't let yourself think of Peace as a preaching station where you go to get a meal of our variety of the Christian faith.
  - ♦ It's not about *going to church*. **It's about being the church.** That's our calling.
  - ♦ Our God who is able to keep us from stumbling works through his family.
- God's mission: *Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you faultless in the presence of his glory with great joy,...*
  - ♦ His children share his passion, for themselves, each other, and any others

### Be a family of believers. Watch out for one another.

#### ❖ *continue to build yourselves up in your most holy faith*

- Satan delights in Christians who think, *As long as I'm saved, that's all that counts.*
- *Go make disciples... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*
- Faith born of the word, feeds on the teachings of the Faith, growing strong & fuller.
- The more we know Christ's holy revealed Faith, we know God's ways and wisdom.
- Early Christians didn't have Bibles at home. Together they built each other up.
- We can learn from fellow Christians in books, podcasts, Youtube - if reliable.
- **But we can't** build each other up without studying together, sharing insights.
  - ♦ It builds up our new selves, our convictions - enriching our new life (faith)
  - ♦ It sharpens our discerning skills - seeing through *fine sounding words*
    - Example: *How can you tell someone they're living a sinful lifestyle. You're a Christian. Aren't you supposed to love people like Jesus, who welcomed sinners?*
      - How will you answer or will you roll over, surrender, and agree?
      - Jesus welcomed sinners who knew their lifestyle was not good. Jesus' mercy rescued them from those pitiful conditions, **not** tell them it was healthy and OK!
      - Those who speak like this don't know Christ's love. Love doesn't give people what they want. Love seeks what is in a person's best interest for the long run.
      - Like Jesus, we will not belittle others, no matter how repulsed we are by their sin and wickedness. See their pitiful condition, respect their person, discover their hurts, and offer Jesus' rescue from sin, his gift of forgiveness and eternal life.
- Building one another up in the most holy faith is more than learning pure doctrine.
  - ♦ Faith embraces God's word, trusts it is good, wise, and best. So it practices it.
    - *don't be afraid, don't be anxious, be patient, kind, gentle, and self-controlled*

- ◆ It's a pitiful condition: *I know it's wrong, but I can't change. That's the way I am.*
- ◆ *You can't, but Jesus can change you.*
- ◆ A family of believers is there to help learn to put off the old and put on the new.
- ◆ Not out of guilt or slavish obedience. But to be set free. Taste a richer life.

❖ ***keep on praying in the Holy Spirit.***

- *in the Holy Spirit* = from a heart of faith
  - ◆ Speaking as the Spirit teaches in the word. Not just saying the words.
- Prayer: speaking to God - petitions, intercession, praise, thanksgiving. i.e. Worship
- How does God's family worship? How do they treat God as their God?
  - ◆ They put his words on their lips. They speak like his children.
  - ◆ They proclaim his attributes. ***...to the only God, our Savior, be glory, majesty, power, and authority...***
  - ◆ They ask him for the things he instructed them to seek, things according to his will.
- Do you see what this does? It's bringing the word to mind and putting it into action.
  - ◆ This sends the word through each one's whole being.
  - ◆ It confirms your individual and collective convictions, molding us into the Faith.
  - ◆ Together we encourage each other to reflect on the word and see new facets.
  - ◆ God pleasing worship acts on his word.
  - ◆ Our prayers don't strengthen our faith. It's God's word lived, spoken, heard, and applied that strengthens us individually and molds our family by shared experiences.

❖ ***...show mercy to those who are wavering. Save others by snatching them out of the fire. Show mercy to still others with fear.***

- Notice: this is spoken to the family of believers - not the Pastor and Elders alone.
  - ◆ A family left saying, *Pastor, you are the only one who reaches out to us.*
- As repentant sinners we've tasted the pitiful condition of sin and know God's mercy.
  - ◆ A brother's struggle with sin might not be mine, but it needs the same mercy.
  - ◆ Knowing that mercy **never** calls the pitiful condition of sin *good* or *OK!*
  - ◆ Mercy seeks their deliverance. Steady the wavering. Snatch those playing with fire.
  - ◆ Jude warns us not to be naive. ***Show mercy to still others with fear.***
    - Respect the dangers of being tempted or attacked.
    - *I walk in danger all the way; The thought shall never leave me That Satan, who has marked his prey, Is plotting to deceive me. This foe with hidden snares May seize me unawares If e'er I faith to watch and pray. I walk in danger all the way.* CW 413
- As we worship and study together, opening up and showing compassion and care, the Spirit builds the bridges for us to serve as God's Life Guards or EMTs.
  - ◆ Knowing each other outside our Sunday best - we can sense danger.
  - ◆ Unless it's an obvious emergency, don't rush to judgment. Visit, listen, and ask.
    - Often when a Christian verbalizes the situation, they see the truth and repent.
  - ◆ Correct, as Paul says, gently. That shows mercy. The goal is rescue and renewal.
- This is important as Peace looks to its future and revitalizes its ministry post-COVID. To be a vibrant family of believers where Jesus will gather others to be nurtured.
- This is important as we see wickedness is glorified, praised, and called good.
  - ◆ A Law approach - in sermons or by promoting government policies to enforce Judeo-Christian values - is not God's mission for us. It attacks and alienates.
  - ◆ Be a family of believers: build each other up in the faith - engage in an active vibrant worship life together - open up to each other and be there to help each other grow and be safe. Show mercy to those you see injured by wickedness.
  - ◆ Be the church of our Lord Jesus. Working this way - our God continually rescues us, keeping us safe until we join him in glory - at death and ultimately on the Last Day.
  - ◆ Our goal is: To be faithful and help each other anticipate the Last Day.