**Cross And Crown Christian Outreach**

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**Preserve Yourself For His Arrival.**

**But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. -** Jude 1:20

Although Jude, who is recorded to have been the author of the biblical book named after him, described himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother to James, biblical historians and scholars believe he was a blood brother of Jesus Christ, especially since he claims to be a brother to James, who himself was said to be a blood brother of Jesus Christ. According to him, he had initially thought of writing to all the Christians in his time on the issue of their shared salvation but, having observed that some proverbial wolfs in sheep skin had slipped into the midst of the brethren, he felt compelled to restrict his message to those who belong to the class of the Called, who are loved by God the Father and who have been kept for Jesus Christ – Jude 1-5.

In this his letter, he reminded them of some groups of people who fell from Grace despite initially being beneficiaries of the Grace, due to their involvement in acts that were unacceptable to the Lord. Amongst the group of people he cited, that lost the Grace of God due to their unacceptable conduct were the Israelites that left Egypt and could not arrive the Promised Land, the angels who lost their position in heaven due to rebellion and people of Sodom and Gomorrah who were destroyed due to their unholy acts. They were cited, to emphasise to his target audience that they need to remain faithful to the Lord in order to continue to enjoy His Grace and avoid His wrath – Jude 6-7. Writing further, he made them aware of the negative activities of these infiltrators whom he said had crept into their midst, urging his target audience to ensure that they do not become corrupted by the actions of these people, in order to avoid the wrath of God – Jude 8-19.

In order to avoid falling victim of the negative acts of these people, Jude, in the scripture that is the foundation of today’s Devotional, and addressing his target audience as friends, advised as follows:

1. That they should build themselves up in the most holy faith – Jude 20a. The use of the word “build” makes it clear that it is going to be a deliberate act on their part. They will also need to have access to materials that will help build their Faith and, being a process, it was going to be time-based. Faith, the bible says comes by hearing the Word of God – Rom. 10:17. The Christian today who desires to avoid the corruption that these group of people represent must make it a habit to dwell in the Word day and night. That remains the only building block to grow a lasting Faith.
2. That they should pray in the Holy Spirit – Jude 20b. To pray in the Holy Spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit dictate the prayer points during prayer sessions – Rom. 8:26. The Bible says the Holy Spirit has the ability to help us know what to say and how to say it. Truth be told, requests made outside the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be based on carnal desires and will remain unanswered as it will likely be outside the Will of God. Only His Will, will be done, whether the true Christian likes it or not – Matt. 6:10.
3. That they should keep themselves in God’s love as they await the mercy of Jesus Christ that will bring them eternal life – Jude 21. To remain in the love of God is to continue to do things that will endear one to Him and avoid transgressing His laws. Because man cannot avoid sin, the one who desires to remain in the love of God must sincerely accept Jesus Christ, and no other, as Lord and Saviour. That remains the only way that sin, which is the main cause of separation of man from the love of God, will not succeed in the life of the Christian – Rom. 3:23.
4. In addition, they should show mercy to those who are still in doubt about the Faith – Jude 22. Just as earlier stated, Faith is a growth process and is time based. It is simply impossible for people to grow at the same pace, especially if they were introduced to the Faith at different times. It therefore becomes important that supposedly more mature Christians exercise patience and show immense understanding with young and genuine believers (Gal. 6:1-10), as the act of accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour may instantly assure one of Salvation but Faith being time-based will need time to mature.
5. That they should snatch others from fire and save them – Jude 23a. The process of snatching can never be a friendly and peaceful act. The one who plans to snatch will in most cases be aggressive in nature as the one to be snatched may not always co-operate with the one that is carrying out the act of snatching. It is however, more of a spiritual process of aggressive prayer and counselling, rather than a physical and violent act. The one that wants to snatch another must also be well grounded else such may find him/her self in the same fire that he/she desires to save from – Gal. 6:1-10.
6. They should show mercy mixed with fear for others – Jude 23b. The “others’ here refers to people who are not young in the faith or those who claim to belong to the faith but are consciously, but surreptitiously working against the Faith. Such people are only destined for destruction but their can be no giving up on the hope that they may repent and be saved, so until the opportunity for repentance is completely lost, they must be shown mercy by being constantly preached to with the hope that they may still repent from their evil ways and be saved.

That Christendom has these negative people who Jude referred to amongst them today is not in doubt. Not only are they present, they are so positioned that they, in most cases, decide the fate of the brotherhood. It has become more important than ever, for anyone who sees him/her self as one who is Called, loved by God the Father and have been kept for Jesus Christ, to preserve this status, if such is to avoid the fate of people who allowed themselves to be lured into acts that made them lose the Grace of God over their lives. Many who are not conscious of this danger have lost it already and are wondering why they are no longer enjoying the supernatural advantage that they use to have. The answer possibly lies in their allowing such false believers to convince them into actions that swayed them away from the godly path they were towing hitherto. The solution to their dilemma is to take the advise of Jude and there is assurance that they will soon find themselves basking in that glory once again. May God continue to preserve us until the day of the arrival of His son in Jesus name. Amen.