

Our Captain's Winning Battle Plan

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[0:00] Jude, beginning in verse 17. But dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

! They said to you in the last times, there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray 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.

Be merciful to those who doubt. Snatch others from the fire and save them. To others show mercy mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

To Him who is able to keep you from falling, to present you before His glorious presence without fault, and with great joy to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen.

[1:08] Amen. Well, we come this morning to a turning point in this letter of Jude. Up to this point, the main body of the letter has been all about them, those false teachers.

Or as Jude says, certain men who have crept inside the Christian community and who are spreading damning doctrines about God and His salvation that are not in accord with the Christian faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

And so you've been warned of this intense danger. You've been told how to identify these dangerous teachers by their ungodly character, their sexual immorality, their rebellion against authority, their bold and arrogant way, their motivation by greed, their divisiveness, their being without the Spirit and therefore left to the brutish animal desires of man.

And you've been assured of their certain destruction when Jesus comes. The coming judgment that is certain not only for them, but all who follow them.

All that we've seen in this little letter of Jude. It's all been about them. These dreamers. These men. They, they, they.

[2:45] But notice the shift with me in verse 20 from them to you. But you, dear friends, whatever they are doing, you must be doing this.

The contrast couldn't be greater. We now are given your response to the danger of these false teachers. This is the application portion of James or Jude's letter.

This is how you must react to such a danger. Now, way back in verse 3, he told us that this letter was all about contending for the faith.

And now here at the end, he starts urging us to contend for the faith. He now comes to us and is exhorting us and commanding us to contend, to fight the good fight of faith.

The call to arms is being sounded, to battle, brethren. And in all that has gone before us, this, that has been preparing us for this.

[3:57] He's been getting our attention. He's been sparking our interest. And by now we've seen our formidable enemy. We've heard of our danger. We've considered others in history who fell from professing the true faith and were judged.

We've heard of Israelites whom God brought out of Egypt and who nevertheless in the desert were destroyed by God for their own belief. We've heard of angels that fell, of Cain who knew the truth and yet forsook that truth.

Of thousands of Israelites who followed Balaam's error and others who were destroyed in Korah's rebellion. Yes, these false teachers of the past had followers.

And so as we come to verse 20, we're now ready to hear these instructions. I trust with keen interest. Warnings are rather irrelevant if we're not aware of the danger.

Jude has perked our ears up with our danger. He now comes with his call to arms. We're ready to march. We're ready to follow orders lest we and others around us become further casualties in this battle for truth.

[5:11] The battle for the souls and bodies of men. And so this morning, we're going to look at five orders from our captain, Jesus Christ.

And there are orders not only on how to survive in this battle, but how to triumph in it. This is the winning battle plan from headquarters.

And these five orders spell out for us what contending for the faith really means. He said it's all about contending for the faith. Now this is what it looks like.

Here are five ways that you will and must contend for the faith. And how much you will profit from Jude's letter can be measured then by how much you follow these five directives.

Now the first order from our Savior is remember. Remember. And it sounded actually back in verse 17. But dear friends, it's an affectionate appeal.

[6:18] Dear friends, remember. Remember. This is the first imperative in this letter. It's the first command that's given to us. Remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

They said to you, in the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. Yes, the apostles forewarned of these men.

Indeed, 2 Peter chapter 3. The apostle Peter told us of these scoffers who quote say, where is this coming?

He promised. Ever since our fathers die, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. And so he's reminding us of what the apostles had forewarned us of.

The coming of these scoffers and false teachers. Now, fresh recruits in the military can be very fearful when they first meet the enemy.

[7:25] They need to be prepared for that eventual meeting. And even so, when soldiers of Christ face all the false teaching in the church today and the success that it is finding, it can be quite unnerving.

how quickly the church that Jesus Christ and his apostles founded, how quickly those churches went astray.

So that by the end of the first century, less than 70 years after being planted, we find staggering errors within these churches, denying fundamental doctrines of the church, professing Christians saying that you've got to be circumcised in order to be saved and go to heaven.

Teaching a Christ plus works, religion, or gospel. You have others teaching that Jesus Christ is not God. Others teaching that he was not fully man.

Those who denied the atonement of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the return of Christ, those who turned the grace of God into a license for immorality.

[8:40] I mean, these are fundamental doctrines without which you have no Christianity at all. And toward the end of the first century, the Lord Jesus sent letters, remember, to seven of those local churches in Asia Minor.

Some of them founded by the Apostle Paul himself. And at least four of them, four of the seven, have serious defections from the truth. At Pergamum, there were people who held to the teachings of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

And they had those who held to the teaching of the Nicolaitans at Thyatira. There was that woman, Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. And by her teaching, she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

All of this was going on while apostles of Jesus Christ were still on the scene. It can be unnerving to the believer to see the success of false teachers.

And in our own day, we see whole denominations of Christian churches saying that homosexuality is just an alternative lifestyle for Christians. And 65% of American Christians saying there are other ways to heaven besides Jesus Christ.

[10:12] And we see that and we can become unsettled and thrown off balance, confused. How kind of our captain to have told us that it would be so.

To have told us ahead of time John expect false teachers and expect many to follow them. You see what a nerving way that that serves us as we come into the world and we see this going on.

We're not taken by surprise. We expect it. Our Savior told us it would be this way. We don't say what's happening.

Is everything spinning out of control? No. No. These false teachers and their success was written about long ago. Verse 4 tells us. Verse 14.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, that's a long time ago, prophesied about these men. And the apostles of Jesus told of their coming. The Geneva Bible notes has this quote.

[11:18] It is by God's providence and not by chance that many wicked men creep into the church. You see, our Lord is not caught by surprise by what's going on in the Christian church today.

It may surprise us but never him. And if we are remembering, that's the first call, if we are remembering what Jesus and his apostles and prophets have told us, then we won't be surprised either.

We won't be caught off guard. We'll expect it. And we'll be on the watch to see these folks when they arise. False teachers are not the derailment of God's plan.

They are rather part of the fulfillment of God's plan. Christ is building his church right in the midst of his enemies. Many false teachers drawing many astray.

But Jesus is maintaining his church and will do so all the way to the end. So forgetfulness of scriptures leaves us to be shaken when we see all this false teaching.

[12:30] So remember, it's just how Jesus said it would be. That's the first word to us by way of application. The second order from our captain is build yourselves up in your most holy faith.

faith. Verse 20. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Now that faith that he's talking there is not your believing. It is rather the truths that you are believing.

It's the Christian faith. The doctrines and teachings of Christ. That's the faith. It's the same faith in verse 3 that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

It's the truth. The doctrines of the Christian religion. And it's entirely holy because it's entirely from God himself. It is your most holy faith.

So that's what you're to build yourselves up in. Jude is saying the more that the doctrines of the Christian religion are being ridiculed and attacked, the tighter your grip on them should be.

[13:37] Are the truths of the Christian faith under attack? Then build yourselves up in them all the more. you need to know the word well to be grounded in its doctrines and in the practices of Christianity.

You need to know that sexual immorality is wrong. Period. You need to know that Jesus Christ is the only way to get to the Father.

Period. And you need to know a host of other things that you'll find in the scriptures. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Keep coming to the Bible to be taught what to believe and how to live.

What to believe and how to live. Now that was Paul's strategy as well. In Acts chapter 20, Paul got the elders of the church at Ephesus together as he was leaving them.

And he says, for three years I've taught you the whole counsel of God. And he says, I know now that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

[14:44] Even from your own number, men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard. Remember, remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

And now as he takes his leave, he leaves them with these words. Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up.

This word about the grace of God, this book is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

This is the instrument that Jude is referring to when he says, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. It's the Bible. don't miss the fact that contending for the faith means much intake of the word of God.

There's no shortcut to building yourself up in the faith. There's a mother rising early enough that before she dives into the task with her children and the day that she might take in this book, the word of God.

[16:06] And there's that young person finding a place in their day with all their school activities where they're alone before their Bible taking in the word of God.

Do you know what they are doing? Do you see them? They are contending for the faith. This faith that is being attacked at school, that's being attacked on the television set, that's being attacked everywhere within the church.

They are building themselves up in this battle. And that's the second word we get from our captain. Build yourselves up in your most holy faith.

Hear it preached. God has given pastor teachers, Ephesians 4 says, to prepare God's people for works of service. Why? So that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of doctrine and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.

[17 : 24] How do you arm yourself for the battle against this false teaching that's sweeping the Christian church today? Will you be present when the word of God is being preached by Christ's appointed pastor teachers?

Soak it in. It's one of the means, the ways that we fight this battle. It's through the word of God that we're built up.

I've seen it in my experience as a pastor in this place for 25 or so years. I've seen that as a rule of thumb those who spend most time in this book are those whose faith is most built up.

Now that's not a secret, it's just a fact. And sometimes I've seen people having growth spurts in their spiritual life and it's been only afterward that I've come alongside and found out the reason was is they've started spending more time with this book.

Some of them are memorizing it, chapters of it. Some of them are pulling it through their minds while they drive to work, meditating on it so that this book is coming into their hearts and they are growing up.

[18 : 46] They're being strengthened in their most holy faith truth. Jude uses the metaphor of building up.

That's a process. Whether it's a house you're building or a body that you're building, it's a process, isn't it? And so we're being called to to be increasing, advancing in our knowledge of the truth.

Now if you've been with us for our study, you know that Peter in 2nd Peter, had forewarned these people about the very same things that Jude is now saying has come.

And so 2nd Peter is very similar to this passage in Jude. And it's Peter who in that second letter warns about these scoffers of the Christian religion, speaks of those who distort the scriptures to their own destruction.

at the end of chapter. He says, therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[20 : 03] the best defense against the errors of these lawless men is to be growing in your knowledge and the grace of Jesus Christ.

Getting to know Christ better in his word. There's safety only in growing. It's not enough just to maintain, well, I know the basics.

No, no. Peter says, if you would not fall from your stable position, you must be growing, ever increasing and advancing. Let me ask you, do you know this book better today than you did a year ago?

Have you made any advancement in knowing the word of God today than last month? How well will you know it next month?

In the end of 2010, should God tarry? We are to be growing in this, building up ourselves in our most holy faith.

[21 : 12] You know, some people, when you talk to them, kind of dismiss Christianity altogether because of all the different interpretations out there about the book. And then you ask them, well, are you reading it?

Well, no. There's so many interpretations out there. Folks, that's an excuse for laziness. That's a desire not to know what's in the book. The fact that there are so many interpretations out there of this should make us all the more dig into it ourselves to be sure that we understand what is the mind of the spirit in his word.

Have that Berean spirit. Search the scriptures daily to see if the things you're hearing are so. If you would be found standing at the end of this battle for truth, you must be building yourselves up in the teachings, the doctrines of the Christian faith.

Bible doctrine matters. People live the way they live because of what they believe. Never scorn Bible doctrine.

You know, this is all part of the battle for truth. When that arch deceiver came to our Lord Jesus as the perfect man, how did he wield him off? It is written.

[22 : 29] It is written. It is written. And he quoted scripture to the devil. That should be a clue to us. That's part of that. That's why this great captain of ours says to his church in times of apostasy, oh, build yourselves up in your most holy faith.

It's the only way you're going to stand. And that being said, it's not a healthy situation when we look around and we see what is the trends in the Christian church today in America.

Oh, there's a serious disinterest in Bible doctrine. No, that's too kind. There is a dislike for Bible doctrine.

Doctrine divides. Churches no longer care about sorting out truth and error, unity. Tolerance. Judge not are the watchwords of the Christian church today.

Never are we to be so dogmatic as to say, this is true and this is false. This is right doctrine. This is false doctrine.

[23 : 43] Who are we to make such judgmental determinations upon what people believe? God's It's a day when serious preaching is being replaced by all sorts of things in the worship.

And Bible reading, personal Bible reading is becoming a thing of the past. Surveys are reporting stunning findings on the ignorance of professing Christians.

Christians. Out of the Ten Commandments, maybe three or four can be recalled. Folks, if you don't know them, you're not living by them. That's just plain, isn't it?

Maybe three or four of the twelve apostles. No, you don't need to know that, all twelve, to be saved, but it's an indication that we have a biblically illiterate church today.

only half knew who preached the Sermon on the Mount. These are Christians, professing born again Christians. Only half can come up with the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount.

[24 : 51] Only three out of five knew that Thomas was not a book in the Bible. Only three out of five knew the first four books of the New Testament. What are the Gospels?

Do you know them? Well, you know more than two fifths of Christendom. Only three out of five, three out of four knew that Isaiah was found in the Old Testament.

You knew that kids, didn't you? Isaiah is in the Old Testament. That's right. Those who are reading their Bibles are familiar with these things. And if they're not even familiar with such basic knowledge of the facts of the Bible, are we stunned when they don't even know that sexual immorality is no way for a Christian to live?

Or that Jesus is the only way. Only one fourth born-again professing Christians knew what John 3.16 said.

They obviously don't know what John 14.6 says. That Jesus is the only way. So, I say, with conditions like that, the conditions couldn't be better for the arch deceiver and his purveyor of false doctrine.

[26 : 03] He smiles when he comes into a church like this that is so ignorant of the Bible. He knows that his lies will not be picked up on. They'll run far and wide without people knowing and smelling the rotten stuff that is being taught and preached from the pulpit.

And such state of affairs in the church makes Christians soft targets for false teachers. years.

Recently, I was in a church in Texas near to, you know, within several miles of where gunmen have gone into churches and just massacred people in the midst of their worship services.

And the response of this church has been, the church where I was, was to develop a security team. their team consists of four former military men, two from the army, one from the air force, and one marine.

I guess that's just the makeup of their congregation. And all of them have a Texas concealed handgun license. And they're all armed at their services.

And everyone else, anyone else with such a license to carry is encouraged to do so. I know that one pastor, six deacons, and several ladies pack.

[27:37] Remember, this is Texas. And guns are as common as Bibles at church. And they encourage their policemen in church to wear their uniforms or at least a badge and a weapon.

And in explaining their policy, the pastor told me our attempt is to be a hard target. A hard target. One in which the deterrent is so large that we discourage anything from happening. That's the aim. We don't want anything happening. We want that presence there. We want it to be seen. You better not start shooting in this church. He says, if it happens, I'm hitting the ground because there'll be lead flying.

Now, whatever you think of that, it is a fact that thieves and evil men prey on soft targets.

If I was a thief and I was out to steal something tonight and I came to your house and I saw that German shepherd behind the fence, I'd go to a softer target.

[28:49] the house without the dog, the house without the lights on. And Jude is telling us it's the same way in the church. False teachers prey on soft targets.

So here's a church and the people are ever so busy. They hardly have any time to read their Bibles at home. Hardly anyone does anymore.

And on Sunday, while we were on vacation, we had the opportunity to go to different churches. And one Sunday, I was struck by the absence of Bibles. And that's this church we're talking about.

On Sunday, hardly anyone's carrying a Bible as they come to worship. And they just depend upon the man up there in front to tell us what the Bible says and to explain it to us.

they're a soft target, folks. They're easy prey for false doctrine and practice. They're gullible.

[29:55] They're easily led astray. Now, here's another church. And the people are just as busy, but many know that they must build themselves up in their most holy faith.

And so they're finding time every day almost to be taking in this word in all sorts of different ways. A good number of them are memorizing the scriptures and reading solid Christian literature.

And on Sunday and Wednesday nights, they wouldn't think of leaving home without their sword in their hand, the Bible. And they follow along as the teachers and the preachers preach to see if these things really be so.

And they're growing, you see, in the knowledge of God's word. They're a hard target for false doctrine and false practice ever leading them astray.

May God make us all as individuals and as a congregation a hard target for these seducing, false teachers.

[31:06] The third word from headquarters is pray in the Holy Spirit. building yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

It's not only the word of God that makes us a hard target, it's also prayer. You remember in that section on spiritual warfare, the apostle Paul counsels us, pray in the Spirit on all occasions, Ephesians 6, 18.

Same, you see, same strategy in this spiritual warfare, pray in the Spirit. Because in this battle for truth, our weapons are not the weapons of this world. Our weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds.

And so we take up the sword of the Spirit and the word of God and we take up prayer to weapons with divine power. In fact, it is by prayer that we call the Almighty Lord into the battle.

God, it is by prayer that you even have any understanding and illumination. It's by God coming and illumining your mind and teaching you and instructing your heart and changing your ways.

[32:19] It's only as God comes and blesses the word of God that you'll profit from it. So it's not only me and my Bible, but it's, oh God, come, open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your own.

Show me things that I need to know in order to not be swept this way and that way by every wind and doctrine. Pray.

In prayer, we draw near to God. And the nearer we are to God, the farther we are from sin and error. The more communion we enjoy with God, the less attractive are the lies that would lead us from him.

So if you would build yourselves up on your most holy faith, pray in the spirit. Pray in the spirit. Because unless the Lord build the house, they that labor, labor in vain.

Unless the Lord build us up in our holy faith, all our Bible reading and sermon hearing will be in vain. All is vain. Unless the spirit of the Holy One come down, brethren, pray.

[33:29] Pray and holy manna will be scattered all around. God. Notice it's pray in the Holy Spirit. No one can pray as they ought apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit.

He's the great helper in prayer. Romans 8, 26 and 27. Because we don't even know what we should pray for as we ought. Oh, but he comes and he helps us.

And he works in our hearts and he creates a very desire to pray for those things that are in line with God's will. And he teaches rebel hearts to pray and to pray not my will but yours be done.

Pray in the Holy Spirit. And so you set yourself to pray and your heart's dull and you're like a bird with a five pound weight on its foot and you can't get heavenward.

Your heart and your soul will not rise. You're so filled with the thoughts of earth. What do you do?

You just, well, I might as well forget praying. No, you pray that you might pray.

[34:33] God, give me the help of the Holy Spirit now to pray. Oh, we need to learn this praying in order to pray. The devil would have us try to pray and see you're all out of sorts, your heart's cold, forget it.

No, no. We must have the Spirit's help in this battle for the souls and lives of men, our own included. So we pray.

Now, do you see what Jesus is telling us? These are two orders from heaven. The word of God and prayer to build yourself up. You say those are rather ordinary means of grace.

Exactly. Exactly. And I trust it will instill meaning in your life this afternoon and tomorrow when you get alone and read the word of God and pray.

But you'll see that I am here and now contending for the faith. I'm here doing what Jesus is calling us in Jude's epistle to do, to fight this battle for truth.

[35:41] And that it will instill energy into your own times of reading the word and praying. it's hard to overestimate the role that those two elements have in winning against false teaching.

The fourth word from headquarters, and let me just remind you that this is something we do to each other. Build yourselves, plural, build yourselves up in this most holy faith.

Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. Share the word of God with each other.

And then number four, the fourth word from headquarters, keep yourselves in God's love. Now, we know that there is a love of God that a believer can never get outside of.

From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear him. Psalm 103 and verse 17. In all eternity, you will never get outside of God's love, dear believer.

[36:49] But here, Jude speaks of an aspect of God's love that the believer is responsible to stay in. Keep yourselves in God's love.

Now, that might strike you as a bit strange, but it's the word of God, so we must come to terms with it. Keep yourselves in God's love. And I believe that the relationship of parents and children is a good way to illustrate and understand what Jude means.

Parents, when your child walks in humble obedience to you, they enjoy the full blessing of your love. You can just heap the whole measure on them and do so safely, not spoiling them, because they're walking in obedience obedience to you.

But when your child willfully rebels against you, he or she steps outside of the full enjoyment of all that your love would love to provide for them.

And you may have to withhold certain blessings from them to show your fatherly and motherly displeasure of their behavior. And you may have to discipline your child.

[38:08] Now, to be sure, that too is love, isn't it? But there's a difference in expression of that love. Yes, it's love. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline, Revelation 3.19.

In fact, Hebrews 12 tells us that this discipline is proof that our heavenly father loves us. But folks, there are more expressions of God's love that are more enjoyable than that one.

Correct? No discipline seems pleasant for the moment. So, which will it be? Children, how will you experience mom and dad's love?

On the end of a paddle out in the woodshed with a fatherly frown? Or to be loved with a day at the ballpark?

Or a day shopping with your father's smile? dad's wish that their children always kept themselves in that place where they could shower the full blessings of their love upon them.

[39:16] And it grieves their hearts when their children step outside of that circle of the fullness love.

So, I believe with our heavenly father, Lensky puts it this way, stay where God can love us as his children and shower upon us all the gifts of love that he has for those who are his children. End quote. Don't make him withhold the expressions of his delighting love and cause him to express his fatherly displeasure and discipline. Stay in the circle of the fullest blessings of his love. Matthew Henry puts it this way, take heed of throwing yourselves out of the love of God to you. What do you mean, Matthew? That is, it's delightful, cheering, strengthening manifestations. No, keep yourselves in the way of God if you would continue in his love. You keep yourself in God's love by keeping your feet in his ways, by obeying his commands. [40 : 26] And I say that with the Lord Jesus words in mind, who said in John 15, 9 and 10, as the father has loved me, so I have loved you.

Now, you remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my father's commands, and remain in his love.

You see? That's the kind of love we are to keep ourselves in, where the father is able to manifest the full expression of his love upon us.

It's speaking of his delighting love. Theologians call it his love of complacency, where he looks and everything in his heart just delights in what he sees, in the behavior, the heart, the will, the mind of his children, and he delights in it.

Keep yourselves in that position where God's delighting love flows upon you. The hymn writer put it this way, in trust and obey, but we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay.

[41 : 39] For the favor he shows and the joy he bestows is for them who will trust and obey. I'll never forget the helpful illustration that Gordon Hawkins gave to me one day as we were talking about this very passage in our backyard.

You know, he came from England, he's with the Lord now, a much sunnier place, but England can be dull and gloomy. And he says, John, I think of this verse, keep yourselves in God's love in this way.

You know, when you're walking down a city street in my country, very often on one side of the street you will find the sun, the warm sun, scattering its light and warmth all over this sidewalk.

But because of the placement of the sun, how low it sets in the sky, and the buildings uptown, on the other side of the same street, you'll find a shadow, and it's cold, and it's miserable.

And when I walk down a street, I like to walk on the sunny side, he says. Can't you see Gordon saying that? Just walking over there and getting there on the sunny side.

[42 : 50] And he says, it's like that. We are to stay on the sunny side of God's love. Yes, he has a frowning side of his love when he takes us and disciplines us.

Oh, but keep yourselves in God's sunny side of his love. where he's not withdrawing his face from you. As you find David crying, oh, God, that you would restore and cause your face to shine again upon me.

He was on the shadow side of God's love. And that's your responsibility. You must do that. Jude lays it at your feet. King Jesus, the captain, says, you keep yourself in God's love.

And I will assure you, the reason that is there is because these false teachers and their false doctrine would like to get you, Christian, on the shadow side of God's love.

Nothing serves their purposes more than have Christians on the shadow side of God's love. That's what Christianity does to you. Look at that guy. Look at that woman. God's hand is heavy on them because God loves them.

[44 : 03] And they feel like a man without strength in the heat of summer. No, no. Keep yourselves on the sunny side. The false teachers want to get you disobeying God and to bring his chastisement upon you to wear you out, to make you say it's not worth it.

Look what we get for serving God. Keep yourselves in the love of God. God's love of God. And the last order that we'll look at this morning, there's more for next week, God willing, but the last order from our captain is as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

As you wait. And the word wait means to wait with eager anticipation, to wait with confident expectation. You know, people who are waiting for someone wait eagerly.

You know what I mean. if someone's waiting for a son to come back from war, they're waiting with eagerness and they're counting the days and they're making plans for when they return.

You're waiting for someone, a husband, a wife, who's been away to return. The whole orientation of your life is focused on that return.

[45 : 23] And that's how we are to keep ourselves in God's love. As we wait, we are people waiting for someone. This Jesus who was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people will appear a second time not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

And so he's coming to bring eternal life, Jude says, that unrealized portion of eternal life because he's already begun eternal life in our hearts, we who are believing and united to Jesus.

There's only two kinds of people on the earth. There's those who live for this present world and there's those who live for the next world that Jesus is bringing. And these false teachers are those who live for this world.

They live as if this world is all there is. Their false teaching, their false immoral lifestyle, it all appeals to the lust of the flesh, the things of this earth. Paul says in Philippians 3, their mind is on earthly things, these false teachers.

Their mind is on earthly things. But we, our citizenship is in heaven and we eagerly await a Savior from there. We're waiting for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[46 : 42] And that hope is a purifying hope. Anyone who's waiting for Jesus to come purifies himself. 1 John 3, 3 says, we want to see him, we can't wait till he comes and we're made like him.

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. We want to be found with confidence and unashamed before him at his coming.

Believers, Jesus is coming. The world's not telling you this. False teachers aren't telling. In fact, the false teachers are scoffing at it. Where is this coming? He promised. You know why they say that? They want you to forget that Jesus is coming.

And everything combined in this world does a good job of making us forget that Jesus is coming.

Christians don't live the same when they're looking with expectancy to the Lord's coming.

All the errors of the false teachers find no gripping power in the man who's looking for Jesus' return. But notice you're waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life.

[47 : 51] It's because of the Lord's mercies that were not consumed. It is because of the Lord's mercies that we will enjoy eternal life. So whatever you think of in eternal life in heaven and what it will be, you need to write one word over the whole of it.

It's mercy. All of it. You didn't deserve any of it. It's mercy. And you're waiting for this mercy that the Lord Jesus is bringing you when he returns.

Paul, you remember, received so much good from his brother Onesiphorus. and he says, may the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day.

Folks, there's nothing better than finding mercy on that day. We're already receiving mercies. Every day they're new. They'll follow us all the days of our life, but the ultimate mercy is the mercy that we will receive on that day when he comes back for us.

The mercy of eternal life. are you expecting mercy from the Lord in that day? Thomas Hooker was a Puritan pastor, greatly used of God.

[48 : 56] He grew up and was educated in Great Britain. And he came to the New England colonies fleeing religious persecution. He's one of the founders of the Connecticut colony, Thomas Hooker.

At his deathbed in 1647, one of his parishioners stood nearby and sought to encourage him in his dying moments. Ah, dear brother, you must be comforted by the fact that you've served the Lord all these years and you're now going to your reward.

And old Hooker looked up from his deathbed and said, No, brother, I'm going to receive mercy. I'm going to receive mercy.

The mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that reminds us that this mercy is found only in Christ. The only reason there's mercy for any of us is because Jesus went to the cross.

And it was wrath for him that it might be mercy for us. It was hell for him that it might be heaven for us. It was death for him that it might be eternal life for us.

[50 : 09] I'm going to receive mercy. mercy. And you see, the man, the woman, the boy, the girl who's going to receive mercy from this Savior is going to stay as far as they can from the false teachings that would pull them away from this Savior.

So let's go to him in silent prayer. If you don't know the Savior, call on him right there in your seat and ask him to have mercy on you. Let's all pray. may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may