HOW TO CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

JUDE 17–23

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – NOVEMBER 15, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.
Jude 17–23, ESV

ICE BREAKER

Where is a place, whether a childhood home, a relative's kitchen, or a favorite spot, that has always felt like "home" to you? What made it feel that way?

SERMON RECAP

- Remember that it's normal for people outside *and* inside the church to work against the church. The apostles predicted scoffers who would follow their own ungodly passions and divide God's people by worldly tactics.
- Remain at home in the triune God's holy love for you. Christians are "beloved in God" (v. 1), and his love is our shelter and fortress (Psalm 91; John 15:9). In Jesus we are already seen, safe, satisfied, significant, and secure. Every sin, fear, and grasp for control is a sign we're leaving home.
- Reach out with holy love for everyone around you. Jude gives three commands: have mercy on doubters, snatch others out of the fire, and show mercy with fear. Doubt is not the same as unbelief. Zechariah 3 pictures the gospel: the Lord rebukes the accuser, strips Joshua's filthy garments, and clothes him in purity. We contend for the faith by mercy, not by anger and attacks, while making sure we aren't pulled into error ourselves.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does the passage say?

- Jude begins verses 17 and 20 with an emphatic "But you, beloved." How does Jude describe the scoffers in verses 18–19, and how does he set the "beloved" apart from them?
- Verses 20–21 hold only one command ("keep yourselves in the love of God"), surrounded by three "-ing" phrases. What are those three phrases, and where do you see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in these two verses?
- In verses 22–23, Jude names three different groups of people and gives a different command for each. Who are they, and what are we told to do for each one?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

- Jude says we must "remember" that scoffers and dividers will arise, even inside the church. Why does it matter that we expect conflict in the church instead of being shocked by it? How could being surprised by it shake someone's faith?
- Jude doesn't say "keep God loving you" but "keep yourselves in the love of God." Look at verse 1 ("beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ"), Psalm 91:1–2, and John 15:9. What does it mean to treat God's love as a home we live in? What does it look like to "leave home"?
- Jude gives a strong warning against false teachers and also gives a call to show mercy to doubters and to those in danger. How do "hating even the garment stained by the flesh" and "have mercy" fit together? Why would Jude say mercy should be shown "with fear"?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

- Pastor David named five core desires: to be seen, safe, satisfied, significant, and secure. Which one are you most tempted to chase in something other than Jesus right now? What would it look like this week to start each morning "at home" in the reality that you already have it in Him?
- Verse 20 describes a building project we do together: "building yourselves up in your most holy faith." Where are you tempted to fit God's Word to your preferences, politics, or priorities instead of adjusting your life to it? How can this group help build one another up in that area?
- Who is one person God is bringing to mind, maybe someone wrestling with doubt, drifting from the gospel, or not yet following Jesus? How could you reach out with merciful encouragement this week? If you're the one struggling with doubt, who is a trusted believer you could share it with?