

## Episode 17: Jude 20-21

### *Live the Contrast*

In our last podcast, we learned that our protection from “these people” is betting our lives on the Word of God, the word which the apostles spoke to us, and our willingness to continue to build ourselves up in the faith which we have been taught.

#### *Jude 20-21*

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

We started this study in **Jude 1** by understanding what it means to be a bondservant of Jesus Christ and we close this letter with solid instruction on what that practically looks like. First, **we are to build each other up in our faith**. This little phrase is a stab into the heart of the religion of Christianity, which as we know is focused on what we can do for God and what we can be for God.

Yet, to build each other up in our faith speaks of exactly the opposite. It speaks to our neediness, it speaks to our inability, it speaks to our utter and desperate dependence upon God, and it speaks to our need to know God for whom He says He is, and to understand and believe who He says we are to Him.

#### *Colossians 2:6-7*

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

How did you receive Christ? Did you have to first do anything to receive Him? Did you have to get yourself “right” with God? Did you have to attain a certain level of “goodness” before you were accepted by Him? Did you have to forgive everyone or repent of all the bad that you had done? Did you have to perform any deeds of service, obedience, worship, or duty? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, and most definitely no! You received Christ by believing that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. You received Christ by looking to Him and merely asking Him, **Yahweh Yasha** (Jesus), to save you.

One of my favorite stories comes from the scene on Calvary right before Jesus died. He was crucified between two criminals—men of ill-repute—and they were witnesses of all that happened to Jesus leading up to His great demise. They saw how the Jews treated Him, they saw the brutal efficiency of the Roman penal system, they saw those who followed Jesus and would not leave the foot of the cross, and they saw how He chose to respond to each person associated with His death. One of these criminals joined along with the Jewish religious leaders and mocked Jesus while the other had a transformed heart.

**Luke 23:39-43**

"So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!" But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

That is it! No sinner's prayer, no baptism, no special repentance, no religious rituals, no need to first forgive others, no Sunday school, no catechism, no sacraments, no pleading to someone already dead, to make a way to Jesus, no duties, and no work, just simple belief in the person of Jesus Christ.

When this man, this criminal, acknowledged that Jesus had a Kingdom, and was therefore the King, and he admitted his abject neediness by pleading with the King to remember him, he was saved (he realized he was completely dependent upon the King for his future). That was it, He believed that Jesus was **Yahweh**. Jesus replied to his faith: "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

This is why John wrote: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave **the right to become** children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."<sup>1</sup> Through belief, this man exercised that right to become a child and, in that moment, dug down deep in his soul and chose to be needy like a little child and asked Jesus to simply remember Him. He did not stand on any work or pretense or give Jesus any reason, He just asked in abject neediness for Christ to remember Him.

This ought to bring us great joy; in fact, we are to live in a constant state of unbelievable joy (even when this life is not too fun). I say this because our life as a Christian is all about what God has done for us and what God will do for us; it never was (or will be) about what we can do for Him—never! It will never even be about what we can do for ourselves. We must consider deeply these words that our beautiful Savior spoke to us.

**Matthew 11:28-30**

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

**Yahweh** wants us to know His rest. Therefore, to build each other up in our most holy faith means that we are to continually remind each other that we do not have to strive, we do not have to prove anything to God, we do not have to perform for God, and we do not have to try and obtain His favor by our acts of obedience, service, duty, or what we consider to be worship. We just need to be **willing** to let Him have His way with us; He will do the rest!

We also must remind each other that He died for all our sin and has nailed every accusation that could

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<sup>1</sup> **John 1:12-13**

ever be made against us on the cross; as such, He has pardoned all our iniquity and has thrown our sin as far as the east is from the west. Therefore, we do not have to spend another second living in shame, guilt, and fear, nor shall we live condemning other true believers for their failings and weaknesses.<sup>2</sup> He already dealt with sin once and for all. So, it is not a burden we need to carry.

We just need to believe that **He Is** (everything we could ever need or want—our **I AM**). Thus, there is nowhere else to go to seek anything in this life. In addition, we need to believe that He is a rewarder of those who now and continually seek Him.<sup>3</sup>

This is the reason He can say, with a straight face, that His burden is light, and His yoke is easy. He just asks us to be **willing**, to believe that **He Is**. He just asks us to now and continually believe, to bet our lives on this truth, and as a little child, look only to Him for all things all the time: our joy, our peace, our provision, our healing, our righteousness, our love, our acceptance, our ability, our gifting, our purpose, our meaning, our identity, our intention, our protection and shelter, our guidance, our direction, our friendship, our loneliness, and as the one whose job it is to make us holy or to set us apart for Him, etc.

We must never forget, that without faith, betting our lives on the truth about God and about who we are to God, it is impossible to please Him.

### **ANYTHING BUT FAITH IS RELIGIOUS FICTION.**

God desires us to learn to rest in the fact that if we trust ourselves to Him, truly trust ourselves in the deep recesses of our soul where we tend to keep Him out, He will abide in us and live His life through us.<sup>4</sup> Our acts of obedience, service, and so on will flow as He literally fulfills the work of the Father in and through our lives. In fact, that is the only way we can ever “do” the works of God—if He literally is the one doing the work and using our bodies to accomplish His tasks. Which is why if we ask anything in His name, He will literally be the one to do it.<sup>5</sup> After all, He is God, and they are His works. We are not God and we cannot do His works; only He can. We can just be a vessel through which He flows. Again, as we have studied, our life as believers here on this earth is all about the *substitution principle*: His life in exchange for our life, in every way imaginable.

Jesus said that our experience with Him is to be light and easy,<sup>6</sup> and it is to be filled with the joy of knowing that it is not up to us to do it right; we simply are to believe that **Yahweh Tsidkenu** has done it right for us; therefore, we are safe to let Him set us apart (make us holy) for His purposes. Doing it right and being “holy” is His work in us, it is not a burden we are to carry.<sup>7</sup> **Funny how belief is the easiest hardest thing in the world.**

It is so shocking how quickly this is forgotten and how quick the enemy can seduce us with all manner

<sup>2</sup> **John 3:16; Colossians 2:13-15; 1 Peter 2:24; Psalm 103:1-14**

<sup>3</sup> **Hebrews 11:6**

<sup>4</sup> **John 15**

<sup>5</sup> **John 14:14**

<sup>6</sup> **Matthew 11:28-30**

<sup>7</sup> See **1 Peter 1:15-16**, the command to be holy is in the *passive* voice. Thus, it is a command for us to let God make us Holy, i.e., to give Him free and unfettered access to our soul to do His work.

of *instinctual religious wisdom*; the wisdom which demands that we serve God, obey God, and do our duties for God, and so on.

For example, I have met so many people who are obsessed with ministry and ministry opportunities. It seems they are not ok with their lives unless they are “serving” God and doing something meaningful. But this is wrong; it is also tragic. I have found that those people never seem to be at rest and their spirit is never at peace. They are usually a wreck within despite the image they project.

We must never forget that Jesus wants us to only do **what** our heavenly Father tells us to do, saying only what He tells us to say, and going only where He sends us, and then only **when** He directs. That is it! Jesus wants the will of the Father done here on earth as He (Jesus) lives His life in and through our bodies, through the presence of the Holy Spirit. He does not want us doing what we want to do for the Father, no matter how well intentioned; it means nothing to Him, for only His works are good!

**TO BUILD EACH OTHER UP IN OUR FAITH MEANS THAT WE MUST CONTINUE TO BE FOUND IN GRACE COMPLETELY CHOOSING TO LIVE LIKE LITTLE CHILDREN WHO ARE JUST AS DESPERATELY IN NEED FOR HIM AS WE WERE IN THE BEGINNING.**

**Jude 20** says we are to pray in the Holy Spirit. In that vein, there is one scripture that has always shocked me in terms of what it says about the true state of our neediness. “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know for what God wants us to pray.”<sup>8</sup> Can you imagine? We do not even know what to pray much less how to pray. That is how pathetic we are on our own. That is how truly needy we are.

The key to praying is praying according to the will of God. If we pray according to His will, we can be confident that He not only hears our request, but that we will receive what we ask for. That is because we are asking for what God already wants to provide since it is according to His will.<sup>9</sup> Kind of makes sense, right? And if we pray according to His will, then Jesus says He will do it—He will literally be the one who does it in and through our lives.<sup>10</sup>

True prayer is about being aligned with His will. Now since we fail at this so frequently, the Holy Spirit helps us by praying for us, and that the Father knows what the Spirit is saying because He pleads for us in harmony with God's own will.<sup>11</sup> Thank goodness there is a backup plan, because if it were up to us, we would be in a lot of trouble.

By the way, praying in the Spirit, in this context, does not mean praying in tongues. **Praying in the Spirit means that our heart, mind, soul, and our strength are all aligned with the Holy Spirit of God enabling us to pray in harmony with the will of the Father.** It means that the Holy Spirit of God is in *practical control* of our heart, mind, soul, and our strength.

This reemphasizes our need to be **willing** to let **Yahweh** have His war against the enemies in our life

<sup>8</sup> **Romans 8:26**

<sup>9</sup> **1 John 5:13-14**

<sup>10</sup> **John 14:14**

<sup>11</sup> **Romans 8:26-27**

and in-turn and let the Holy Spirit fill us and dwell in us. Hence, we all need to enroll in Pain Central and start to learn **WHY** we can now be trusting ourselves to **Yahweh** and **HOW** to now be trusting ourselves to **Yahweh** (now and continually).

When we come to believe that He is our “**I AM**” we do not look to ourselves (the **ME**), or to anyone else, to be our Lord, our Master, our Provider, our Helper, our Healer, our Defense, our Justice, our Sanctifier, our Peace, our Shepherd, our Righteousness, our Commander, our Shield, our Strength, our Rock, our Redeemer, or Savior, or our God (by the way, those attributes are all aspects of **Yahweh’s** name).

And when we now and continually believe, the Spirit of God fills us more and more:

- As we release each area of our life (*for His possession*)—the areas which we have kept protected and locked down so no one will ever hurt us ever again (especially God).
- As we allow our minds to be transformed by the Word of God and chose to believe all that the Bible says about Jesus and the Father, and who **Yahweh** is and who we are to Him.
- As, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we reject and allow **Yahweh** to eject from our soul everything within our being that raises itself up against the true knowledge of Jesus Christ and fights against Him being our **I AM**.
- As we simply rest in our need for Him in every part of our life and reserve nothing for ourselves or this world.

And when we are filled with the Spirit, when the Spirit controls us, we will pray in the Spirit, for we will have the mind of Christ,<sup>12</sup> and find that we are able to pray as He prays. I want you to keep in mind that “praying in the Spirit” is in the *present* tense; so, this actually speaks to how we live in every moment of our now, and not just to those times that we set aside to “pray.”

There was an old song by Keith Green which said: “make my life a prayer to you, I want to do what you want me to, no empty words, and no white lies, no token prayers no compromise.” It went on to say: “it’s so hard to see when my eyes are on me; I guess I’ll have to trust and just believe what you say, oh you’re coming again, coming to take me away.” In a way that song captures the true flavor of our passage. Our lives are to be an ever-present prayer to the Lord as we live to do only what He wants us to do.

This next part of the passage (**Jude 21**) is fascinating. We are commanded to keep ourselves in the love of God waiting, or looking for, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. This is also another way of saying we are to build ourselves up in the faith. And being rendered in the *aorist active*, it is to be the overall essence of our lives.

Let me explain. It is a given fact that we are loved by God. In **Jude 1** we are called “*beloved*,” which is the *perfect passive* use of the word *agape*—the love that defines God, as He is *agape*.<sup>13</sup>

The *perfect* tense means that this love for us has been decided upon, it is a done deal, and it is without fault or weakness. Thus, like God, it can never change or waiver. Remember, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.<sup>14</sup> Thus, His love for us is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And nothing can

<sup>12</sup> **1 Corinthians 2:16**

<sup>13</sup> **1 John 4:8, 16**

<sup>14</sup> **Hebrews 13:8**

separate us from the love of Christ—NOTHING!<sup>15</sup>

Yet, believing that we are loved, much less perfectly loved, is one of the hardest things for our heart, our mind, our soul, our body, to accept. Our *flesh* absolutely rejects this premise. All of us, at some level, have struggled with believing we are loved, accepted, wanted, and needed; thus, we have been on a lifelong pursuit to prove the issue out one way or the other. Sadly, too many people seem to be bent on proving that they are **NOT LOVED**, accepted, wanted, or needed. They do this by putting unrealistic expectations and demands on others just waiting to be rejected, waiting to be abandoned, waiting to be chastised, etc., thereby proving what they have believed all along. They are not loved!

So many of our issues in this world would be immediately solved if people knew and were convinced at the depth of their soul that they are loved with an unalterable and unfailing love. But every wound we have received has cut us deep and the pain (though often at a very unconscious level) is a constant reminder to our soul that if God really loved us, if Mom or Dad really loved us, if so-and-so really loved us, they would have cared for us, protected us from hurt, sheltered us, provided for us, and most importantly chose us over themselves. But few of us have had that experience.

And because so many have struggled receiving, at the depth of our being, the truth of God's love for us, we have adopted all these religious means, according to our *instinctive religious wisdom*, to get His love, to secure His love, to earn His love, to obtain His blessing, and to distract us so we can ignore the pain of the wounds which He has caused in our lives. Honestly, our religious *flesh* is one of the biggest enemies to abiding in the love of God.

Yet, we must remember that if He is sovereign (in the true sense of the word), if He is the Alpha and the Omega, then everything in our lives begins with Him and ends with Him. That means every wound, every hurt, every disappointment, every pain, every terror, every violation, every trauma, every abuse, every rejection, and every insult has come from His hands; and is therefore an expression of His great love for us. It is hard to accept, but everything is from Him, by or through Him, and to Him.<sup>16</sup> Hence, He is the **Adonai** and there is no other. And more than that, all of what He has done, caused, and allowed in our lives is good, pleasing, and perfect.<sup>17</sup> Even writing these words, my body trembles with incredulity. How can that be true when so much of it has hurt so badly.

### **HOW CAN THE TERRORS AND THE TRAUMAS WE HAVE EXPERIENCED BE LOVE? DO WE REALLY WANT TO KEEP OURSELVES IN THAT KIND OF LOVE?**

Clearly, we have a trust issue when it comes to God's love for us. And this is the reason why so few people believe in the sovereignty of God, even though they make professions that they do. The truth is that they only kind-of do.

It is far too easy to forget that God has marked us as aliens and strangers in this place, we simply do not belong to this world.<sup>18</sup> And since He called us from before the foundations of the earth to be recipients

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<sup>15</sup> **Romans 8:35-38**

<sup>16</sup> **Romans 11:36**

<sup>17</sup> **Romans 12:2**

<sup>18</sup> **1 Peter 1:1, 2:11**

of His great love,<sup>19</sup> **Yahweh Mekoddishkem** and **Yahweh Qanna** have been busy at work from the get-go to separate us or circumcise us from this world.

These two names of God tell us that, from the beginning, He has been jealously fighting every enemy in our soul that wants us, nay, craves for us, to make our home in this world, i.e., to find our belonging, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our future, and our hope in what this world has to offer.

All these yearnings continually fight against our now and continually choosing to live like a little child dependent upon **Yahweh** for every part of our lives. Instead, they seem to push us aggressively down the path of apostasy. Hence, **Yahweh** must destroy them; it is an act of great love and mercy.

**Yahweh** wants us to be so secure in His love that we become convinced that there could have been no other path than the one He has set before us. He did what He needed to do (and will do what is needed) to break the hold which the world, the enemy, and the *flesh* has on our lives. Therefore, from the perspective of His promise to transform us into the image of the Son, it is all good, pleasing, and perfect.

God knows this is a difficult issue with which to settle emotionally. We all want a warm and fuzzy God who only blesses us. And it is our unbelief in His perfect love for us (a love which demands that He goes to war against us) that is at the crux of why we trust in ourselves, why we give ourselves to idolatry, and why we fall into apostasy. So, He tells us to keep **now** and **continually** looking for the **compassion** or the **mercy** of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal.

**IF WE LOOK FOR HIS MERCY, EXPRESSED IN JUDGEMENT,  
WE WILL COME TO UNDERSTAND THE DEPTH OF HIS LOVE.**

Let me explain. When I start to grumble and complain about the way God has directed my life, especially once I ascribe to Him the responsibility for my life instead of being a victim and blaming myself, others, or the devil, He always settles me down by showing me how compassionate and merciful He has been to me. **Simply said, He has not dealt with me according to my sins.**

And although He is a perfect God who demands perfection, He has chosen to let **Yahweh Tsidkenu** be my perfection.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, He has not condemned me for my sins and my wrongs, nor has He punished me for even blatant rebellion and hostility towards Him. Rather, He has used all of it as an education tool to patiently teach me something else I needed to discover about His perfect love for me. In other words, He shows me another layer of my wrong belief and unbelief that He wants to transform. **His mercy grounds me; His mercy secures me!** So, I now and continually keep looking for His mercy in my times of judgment (during the war He must wage) instead of looking for His punishment in judgment.

I used to be so afraid of God believing that with every transgression, every sin, and every complaint that God was going to thump me in some sort of awful judgment of punishment. I knew the passage that says in perfect love there is no fear.<sup>21</sup> But I was afraid. Clearly, I had not been perfected in His love, I had not yet chosen to believe, at the core of my being, the nature of *agape* love.

<sup>19</sup> ***Ephesians 1:4, 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13***

<sup>20</sup> **Yahweh Tsidkenu**

<sup>21</sup> ***1 John 4:18***

Hence, every time I sinned, I tended to run away from God (relationally) until enough time elapsed and I felt I had performed the right kind of emotional, mental, and practical penance. Then I slowly eased my way back into His graces. This was a life of terror, self-induced terror, as I continually looked to His punishment instead of His merciful judgment. As a result, I never found myself safe and secure in His love; I did not know His rest.

For sure, I mistook God's discipline—Him teaching me **WHY** I can believe in His love and **HOW** to believe in His love—for *punishment*. After all, my life was filled with troubles and sorrows that never seemed to end. I thought I was just reaping what I had sown (that is what I had been told). I never understood that He was circumcising me from this world, and I most definitely did not realize how much cutting He was going to have to do to make me His own. I thought a little snip here and a little snip there, but NO! As a result, I just thought He was mean, scary, and a terrible Dad.

But it was my wrong belief and my unbelief that kept me looking to His judgment as punishment instead of mercy. Therefore, the Holy Spirit had to train me to now and continually dig down deep in my soul and look for His mercy in all things.<sup>22</sup> The reality of His mercy, which triumphs over judgment, had to become a truth that I believed in my heart, mind, soul, and strength. And each one of those aspects of my being required different lessons and a different sort of training.

This lie I believed was still premised on the notion that my sin somehow impacts my relationship with God; therefore, what I experience as pain and troubles is a payment, a payback, a retribution for my sin.

**IN EACH AREA OF MY LIFE, I HAD TO BE CONVINCED THAT WHAT GOD WAS DOING HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH MY SIN, BUT EVERYTHING TO DO WITH MY BELIEF, OR MORE APTLY STATED, MY UNBELIEF.**

**MY SIN WAS JUST A TOOL TO EDUCATE ME OR CONVINC ME OF THE ATTRIBUTE(S) OF YAHWEH THAT I WAS NOT BELIEVING TO BE TRUE FOR ME.**

I had to let the Holy Spirit train me to believe that every step I take, whether for Shalom (peace) or for Ra (evil) is necessary for me to have the opportunity to know why living for myself, living for this world, and living for others, is a huge waste of time.

I had to let the Holy Spirit train me to bet my life upon that truth that the issue of sin is no longer an issue of sin between me and God; rather, it is just a tool used for education.

I had to let the Holy Spirit train me to believe that I am free, thus, there is no law that condemns me, I am unrestrained by anything other than His *agape* love.

I had to let the Holy Spirit train me to finally believe that only God is good, therefore, everything in me, every thought, and every deed, that does not derive from Him is sin anyways (**the source matters; the source is everything**). I had to learn to get over it all and simply let Him be my goodness and rest in the fact that only He is my goodness.

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<sup>22</sup> "looking" is rendered in the *present middle participle*.



**WHEN WE LOOK FOR HIS MERCY, WE WILL FIND THE POWER TO DEFEAT THE ENEMIES  
OF GUILT, SHAME, FEAR, AND UNFORGIVENESS.**

Moreover, it is the mercy of God that leads to Christ, to eternal life Himself (*Jude 21*). This may sound weird, but eternal life speaks not so much about our living forever and ever as it describes our living in Jesus both now and forever and ever, as He is eternal life.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *1 John 1:2, 5:11-13, 20*