

# A Sermon on Jude 22-23

## RESCUE THE PERISHING

A SERMON ON

Jude 1:22-23

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JUDE: CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH KEEP YOURSELF IN THE LOVE OF GOD			
Jude 1:1-4	Jude 1:5-16	Jude 1:17-23	Jude 1:24-25
Salutation & Purpose	Exposure & Examples of the False Teachers	Exhortation to the Beloved in God	Exaltation of God
Contend for The Faith	Their Doom (Jude 1:5-7) Their Denunciation (Jude 1:8-10) Their Description (Jude 1:11-16)	Believer's Defense Against False Teachers	Doxology
Exhortation	Warning	Exhortation	Benediction
Date: A.D. 70-80 (difficult to date)			

[Booklet - Jude: Recognizing the Danger Among Us - 33 pages](#)

[Click for Verse by Verse Commentary on the Book of Jude](#)

[Jude Introduction](#) -John MacArthur

[Jude Introduction](#) -Charles R Swindoll

[NIV Study Bible Introduction](#)

[Jude: International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

[Jude Introduction](#) - Wil Pounds

[Jude: Author, Date, Audience, Occasion, Detailed Outline](#) - James Van Dine

[Jude: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#) -Daniel Wallace

[Jude, Theology of - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

[Jude Notes and Outline](#) - J Vernon McGee

**Jude's Purpose:** Expose the false teachers who had crept into the fellowship unnoticed and encourage the saints to stand firm in the faith and rescue the perishing.

**Key Verses:** Jude 1:4, Jude 1:20, Jude 1:24, 25

**Key Words:** Lord (Jude 1:4, 5, 9, 14, 17, 21, 25), Faith (Jude 1:3, 20) Keep/Kept (Jude 1:1, 6, 21, 24), Ungodly (Jude 1:4, 15, 18), Beloved (Jude 1:1, 3, 17, 20), Judgment (Jude 1:6, 9, 15), Remember (Jude 1:17), Angel/Archangel (Jude 1:6, 8, 9), Holy Spirit (Jude 1:19, 20). See discussion of **key words**, a vital component of **inductive Bible study**.

**The following outline is adapted from J Sidlow Baxter's Outline entitled "Contend for the Faith"**

**GREETING**, Jude 1:1,2.

**WHY CONTEND EARNESTLY - APOSTATE TEACHERS** (Jude 1:3-16).

Their subtle perversions: Two basic denials (Jude 1:3-4).

Their certain doom: Three historic examples (Jude 1:5-7).

Their impious ways: Three historic examples (Jude 1:8-11).

Their utter falsity: six awful metaphors (Jude 1:12-13).

Enoch's prophecy: Coming destruction (Jude 1:14-16).

**HOW TO CONTEND EARNESTLY - OUR RESOURCES** (Jude 1:17-23).

Realize that the apostasy has been foretold (Jude 1:17-19).

"Build," "pray in the Spirit," "keep," "look" (Jude 1:20,21).

Show compassion towards certain who contend (Jude 1:22).

Others seek urgently to rescue: but keep pure (Jude 1:23).

**JUDE'S DOXOLOGY**: Coming consummation. (Jude 1:24, 25)

In all contending for the faith we must "keep ourselves in the love of God," the counterpart of which is that the love of God must be in us. We must love, even while we contend against the errors of apostatisers (Contend without being contentious!). We must love their souls even while we oppose their words and deplore their ways. Sometimes it is delicately difficult to keep these separate, but the love of Christ in our hearts (cf Ro 5:5,) will put wisdom on our lips... There are some who "contend" against us. Endless counter-contention with them is useless. But there are others who need "snatching out of the fire"; they have been deceived, and in one sense or another, i.e. by bewilderment, remorse, doubt or danger, are in the fire. And there are still others on whom we are to "have mercy with fear," i.e. being cautious lest in seeking to bring them back we should defile our own garments. (J Sidlow Baxter)

Jude is the only NT book devoted exclusively to confronting "apostasy," meaning defection from the true, biblical faith. Jude does not quote the OT directly, but there are at least 9 obvious allusions to it. Contextually, this "epistolary sermon" could be called "The Acts of the Apostates." - John MacArthur

**Application**: Fight for the truth! Stand up against error! The book of Jude is the very definition of punchy and pithy proclamations—with its short commands and statements popping off the page like machine-gun fire. But in our day and age, punchy has become rude or unacceptable. In many circles the forcefulness of Jude will not be tolerated, the crowds preferring a softer and gentler side of the Christian faith. But Jude reminds us that there is a time and a place for the aggressive protection of the truth from those who would seek to tear it down. How can you participate in defending the truth from error? - C R Swindoll

## RESCUE THE PERISHING

### A SERMON ON

#### Jude 1:22-23

Let's review the context of Jude 1:22-23 by looking at who wrote the letter. In Jude 1:1note we see that Jude is the author and is a brother of James. What is not mentioned is that he is a brother of Jesus, in fact a brother who John 7:5 says was not "believing in" Jesus, but now he is – Let's make this practical. Let me ask you....Is there a relative you think is too far gone for Jesus to save? Let me encourage you – Keep on living the Gospel before them and don't stop praying for them – as Paul Harvey used to say on the radio "You have not yet seen the end of the story!" If I was Jesus' half-brother I would have let everyone know and yet Jude calls himself a slave or a bondservant, in Greek a doulos, which pictures a man whose will is absolutely "swallowed up" in the will of His Master. Jude's life was not his own but belonged to Jesus (cf 1Cor 6:19-20-note, Titus 2:14-note, 1Pe 2:9-note). Is that truly the desire of my heart – to live out His good and acceptable and perfect will (Ro 12:2-note) for my life? Do my daily choices demonstrate I am wholly sold out to Jesus? Can I refer to myself as a bond-servant of Jesus?

Let's go on the recipients -- To whom is Jude writing this short letter? "the CALLED, BELOVED by God the Father, KEPT for Jesus Christ" When was the last time you really stopped to meditate on the truth that the God of the Universe really loves you with a love that is unconditional, infinite, perfect, everlasting? He calls you His "beloved"! This is a great truth upon which we should frequently meditate, especially when we don't feel beloved (Action Point - Memorize and Meditate on 1Jn 3:1-note). Remember our feelings can be (and usually are) deceiving, but God's Word is truth and the truth about every genuine believer is that no matter how you "feel," you are still a "CBK" – one who is called, beloved, kept! Forever!

Why is Jude writing? He is very clear on this – Jude wants the saints to earnestly contend (even to the point of exerting agonizing effort) for [the faith](#) (sound doctrine, the Gospel, cf. Gal 1:23; 1Ti 4:1) which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Now Jude explains why they are to earnestly contend) For certain persons have crept in unnoticed (they've "slithered" in by a side door, so it's an "inside job" [cf "savage wolves will come in among you" = Acts 20:29-30-note] – they come into the body and pretend to be part of the body), those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." So they propagate false doctrine, specifically a doctrine that teaches they have a license to sin because they are covered by grace. Go ahead and sin because grace has paid the bill!

Last week we looked at Jude 1:20-note and Jude 1:21-note. And what did we learn? Remember that Jude's main objective is for the saints to earnestly contend for the faith and so he gave them 4 items on his spiritual checklist to enable them to faithfully contend without being contentious. Actually he gave them FIVE –

**Number 1** - What does Jude charge the believers to do in Jude 1:17? Let's read it – "But you, beloved, ought to REMEMBER (command conveying a sense of urgency. Do this effectively) the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." What's the key word? REMEMBER! Don't forget what the apostles spoke! And what is the application for us today? Don't forget about what the apostle's wrote in the New Testament. So the first way to EARNESTLY CONTEND for the faith is to know what the NT says about THE FAITH. Even better, Memorize the Word so that you will be enabled by the Spirit to Meditate on the Word. Hebrews 5:14 (note) says that "SOLID FOOD is for the mature, who because of practice have their sense strained to discern good and evil." So as we take in the SOLID FOOD of the NT, and REMEMBER it, our "spiritual antennae" (so to speak) will be on high alert for someone sneaking into the body and teaching ERROR instead of TRUTH.

**Number 2** – Build yourselves up with the Word – Peter says we are to be like newborn babes LONGING FOR the PURE milk of the Word that by it we might GROW in respect to SALVATION. (1Peter 2:2-note) Do you understand what Peter just said? Simply put -- NO intake of the Word, NO spiritual growth. PERIOD! Without answering let me ask you and remember you are under grace not law – How much time this last week did you spend in the Word of God, the PURE WORD, not devotionals, not books about spiritual topics but the LIVING AND ACTIVE WORD? Don't be deceived or detoured – you will not build yourself up if you are not in the Word on a regular basis.

**Number 3** (Number 1 – REMEMBER the NT, number 2 – EAT the word each day and number 3) PRAY in the Holy Spirit. If you are filled with His Word you are more likely to be filled with His Spirit ([See discussion](#)) and to pray His word which is praying in His will (cf 1Jn 5:14-15-note). Have you ever been impressed to pray for someone in the middle of the day, even someone you had not thought about in a long time? I think that is being sensitive to the Spirit initiating prayer and that is one example (but not the only way) of praying in the Holy Spirit. (cf Eph 6:18-note, Ro 8:26-27-note)

**Number 4** – Keep yourself in the love of God – In a word – Obey the Word you used to build yourself up. Don't be a HEARER of the word and not a DOER because you are only fooling yourself (cf James 1:22-note). It's like the old saying "In one ear and out the other!" OBEDIENCE is the key to BLESSING – Jesus said His desire for us is that we might have life and have it ABUNDANTLY (Jn 10:10b). Let me ask you - Are you experiencing abundant life? Are you keeping yourself in the love of God? Keeping yourself in God's love is a key to abundant life. Jesus said if you really love Me you will obey my commandments without hesitation (delayed obedience is disobedience beloved) and that will lead to ABUNDANT LIFE (Jn 14:15). Let LOVE not LEGALISM motivate your OBEDIENCE, remembering that the Gospel teaches that you are under grace not law!

**Number 5** – Keep watching the Eastern horizon for the imminent return of our Bridegroom to sweep us away with Him forever (cf 1Thes 4:17-note, cf Second Coming). Repeatedly (five times - Rev 2:16-note, Rev 3:11-note, Rev 22:7, 12, 20-note) in the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, Jesus said "**I am coming quickly.**" Beloved, He could come while I am speaking. There is a great word used only once in the NT – it is MARANATHA which means "Come Lord" or "Come now". Do you have a 'Maranatha Mindset?' – Let me ask you - What changes in your lifestyle – in what you watch, in what you surf on the web, in what you spend money on, in how in much time I devote to a hobby, etc, etc – what difference in those activities would it make if you begin today to live (enabled by the Holy Spirit) with a Maranatha Mindset, a "COME NOW LORD" mindset? Remember what (WHO) you are looking for WILL (should) radically impact WHAT (Who) you are living for – for self or for Savior, for time or for eternity! The choice is yours. Only one life, Twill soon be past, Only what's done, For (in) Christ will last!

## SO LET'S REVIEW OUR REVIEW...

Jude says to that in order for us to earnestly contend for the Gospel we are to

REMEMBER the WORD,

READ the WORD,

PRAY the WORD,

OBEY the WORD and

KEEP WATCHING for the LIVING WORD!

Let's read Jude 1:22-23 in the ESV = And have mercy on those who doubt. Save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Without going into any detail, these two verses are fraught with technical difficulties and some translations suggest Jude is describing 2 groups but the ESV (NAS, NIV, RSV, etc) describes 3 groups – doubters, those in danger of fire and those with stained garments. Are they believers? We cannot be dogmatic and even the experts don't agree. We will address each group and how we as believers are to respond to each group.

**Let's look at the first group** -- Who are those wavering or having doubts and what are they doubting? I think that in this passage they are believers who have listened to those who have crept in and promoted a false teaching that GRACE gives us a LICENSE to SIN. They are wavering between the sound doctrine of the apostles and the false doctrine of those who have crept in. They have been taught it's okay to sin because we are under grace, so we don't worry about our sin. But if one begins to sin without reservation, what happens to their heart? They begin to doubt their salvation. They begin to doubt if they are truly the called, the beloved and the kept! So this group are likely doubting sound doctrine, including the doctrine of eternal security.

And so Jude issues a command (present imperative), not a suggestion, that we are to "Have mercy" -- we are to continually be ready to show mercy. Like a pharmacy dispenses medications to make our body healthy, we are to be "God's pharmacists" so to speak continually dispensing mercy to help restore their souls to spiritual health. And how often do we need to do this? Habitually, daily, as our lifestyle, an attitude and action we can only do as we are filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit. Let's all be honest – If someone comes to us week after week, continually expressing doubts over what they believe, our fleshly reaction is tell them – "Get over it – Just get in the Word and grow up!" But when we are filled with the Spirit, He empowers us to dispense God-like compassion whenever the need arises. We are God's vessels of honor (2Ti 2:21-note), God's instruments, God's ambassadors (2Cor 5:20-note) of the soul saving and soul restoring Gospel and like God are not to condemn, criticize or judge them for their wavering faith but are to give them what they need. Remembering this simple definition of mercy – It is not giving them what they DESERVE but what they NEED! So these doubters need our help, our reassurance, our reminder that they are "the called, beloved by God the Father, kept for Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:1) We need to emphasize that the Father loves them and the Son keeps them and guards them with His watchful eye. As the words of the Civilla Martin's great old hymn say "[His eye is on the sparrow](#), and I know He watches me." That's giving them Spirit enabled mercy! That genre of kind words and actions is what will attract their wavering hearts back to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, to the sound doctrine that revives their faith.

**Now let's look at the SECOND GROUP** – Jude writes "Save others by snatching them out of the fire." SAVE means to rescue someone from danger or peril. While some interpret these as believers, their potential fate of fire would strongly suggest they are those in the church who are not genuine believers and are being lurked from the truth of the Gospel by this surreptitious false teachers. What is the danger described in this passage? Clearly the danger is FIRE so the question is to what does FIRE refer? Are there any clues in Jude's letter. There is a clue in Jude 1:7-note where Jude compares the fate of the false teachers who are mixing grace with a license to sin with the fate of sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah, and what is that fate? It is that they will undergo "the punishment of eternal fire," which is clearly a reference to hell. As an aside many speak of hell as a place of eternal torment and it is, but the most tragic description is Paul's statement in 2Thessalonians 1:8 where those destined for this FIRE "will pay the penalty of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power." This tragic truth should break all of our hearts for those who are in danger of the FIRE. Our attitude should be like the great American evangelist Dwight L Moody of whom it is written "Mr. Moody never preached about hell without tears." Brethren, now that's SPIRIT EMPOWERED COMPASSION like Jesus Who lamented over Jerusalem (Mt 23:37-39). This same Spirit enabled heart attitude is what should motivate us to speak the Gospel, the power of God for salvation (Ro 1:16-note), to those in danger of eternal separation from the glory of God! In Psalm 3:8 David reminds us that "salvation belongs to the LORD". So clearly saving souls is God's business and yet He has graciously given every believer the incredible privilege of being His instrument through which the message of salvation can be sounded forth. In 2Corinthians 5:18 (note) Paul writes that "God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ...gave us the

ministry of reconciliation.” So beloved you are in the ministry whether you know it or not! And you didn't even have to attend seminary! Paul went on to add in 2Cor 5:20 that “we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” The Lord Jesus Christ assigned that same mission to every believer when He commanded us to “Go therefore and make disciples (command - "Just Do It!") of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19). Brothers and sisters, there is therefore no higher calling, no greater privilege, no more urgent task than the ministry of reconciliation God has entrusted to us. By the power of the Holy Spirit may God enable us all to obey Jude’s command to “SAVE others by snatching them out of the fire.” But let’s be honest – How many of us regularly share the Gospel with those in danger of eternal separation from the glory of God? And why not? What holds us back? I think for most of us it is the fear of rejection or of being labeled a “Bible thumper” or a “Jesus freak.” So how can we be a church that without hesitation or reservation obeys Jude’s command to “SAVE OTHERS” by speaking the Gospel? Let me suggest that we imitate Paul’s example – as great an evangelist as he was in Ephesians we see him make an interesting prayer request of the church at Ephesus. Listen to what Paul asks in Ephesians 6:19-20-note - “Pray for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth BOLDLY to proclaim the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may DECLARE IT BOLDLY, as I ought to speak.” What word do you see repeated? Let’s read it again – did you hear it this time? BOLDLY is repeated twice. Paul of all people is asking for HOLY BOLDNESS to speak the Gospel! Can I suggest that this is a prayer we could begin to pray for each other? Would God answer this prayer? (cf 1Jn 5:14-15-note) I think He would and I think we might begin to have some testimonies of how God’s Spirit gave us courage to speak the Gospel in situations we would never have done before in our own power, fearfulness and timidity. God grant Your Church everywhere to be a Spirit filled church with Spirit empowered believers who are filled with holy boldness and courage to tell others about Jesus that we might see Him rescue the perishing. And all God’s church said “Amen!”

Fanny Crosby the great blind hymn writer put Jude’s “GREAT COMMISSION” in these words (words which by the way literally resulted in several conversions by just listening to the hymn) –

“ [RESCUE THE PERISHING](#), care for the dying,

SNATCH THEM IN PITY FROM SIN AND THE GRAVE;

Weep o’er the erring one, lift up the fallen,

Tell them of Jesus, the Mighty to save.”

Or as Jude says snatching (verb depicts a sudden, forceful snatching) them out of the fire. Listen to the third verse

“Down in the human heart, crushed by the Tempter,

Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;

Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.”

Did you hear the phrase “TOUCHED BY A LOVING HEART, WAKENED BY KINDNESS”? That’s the MERCY that Jude is calling us to live out before those that are perishing. Speaking kind words, not harsh, condemning words will open the door for the Gospel. So let us pray for boldness. Let us pray that we will be merciful or mercy filled. Let us boldly speak the Good News of Jesus to rescue the perishing, snatching them from eternal separation from God.

**Now let’s briefly look at the third group.** Jude like a commanding officer issues another command “to others SHOW MERCY (make it your practice to show mercy) with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.” We know what it means to **show mercy** but what does it mean to show mercy WITH FEAR? Some interpret WITH FEAR as showing mercy with an attitude of a reverential fear of the Lord. That could be, but the other interpretation is equally valid and that is to dispense mercy mixed with caution lest we become spiritually contaminated by their polluting sins. And so one writer refers to this as the “Dangerous” group. The New Living Translation paraphrases it “Show mercy to still others, but DO SO WITH GREAT CAUTION, hating the sins that contaminate their lives.” An old adage sums up the attitude we should have toward these individuals – love the sinner but hate their sin! We don’t know exactly what sin or sins of their fallen flesh nature they were committing, but we know that it requires great caution on our part in interacting with them. Think of an individual who is drowning. What is the one warning you often hear? Be careful when you try to rescue them so that they don’t end up drowning you because they are in such a frenzied state of panic. And so one writer says “There is danger to the sinner; but there is also danger to the rescuer. He who would cure an infectious disease runs the risk of infection.” In fact recall, the recent West African Ebola Outbreak in which several health care workers in seeking to SHOW MERCY, contracted the highly contagious virus and died!

WHAT’S THE MESSAGE FOR US TODAY? Before we were saved Isaiah 64:6 says “all our righteous deeds were like filthy rags,”



but once we were saved by grace thru faith in the Gospel, Isaiah 61:10 says God clothed us “with garments of salvation”. It is this latter garment that, through presentation of the Gospel, we offer in love and mercy to those in filthy, polluted spiritual garments. However we must be both WISE and WARY, lest we begin to TOLERATE their sin, then TOY with it, and ultimately are TRAPPED by it ourselves. Here is the take home message – Yes, empowered by the Spirit, we must continually show MERCY to these individuals, but must never forget that compromise with their polluted lifestyle will very possibly cause our spiritual downfall!

**LET'S END WITH AN ILLUSTRATION OF RESCUING THE PERISHING** -- This illustration from a real life story helps grasp to whom and how we are to show mercy – [Jim Cymbala](#) well known pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle Church, an inner city church in NYC, tells the following story in his book [Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire](#) – “Jesus didn't just speak the healing word to lepers from a distance of thirty yards. He touched them (Mt 8:2-3). I shall never forget Easter Sunday 1992—the day that Roberta Langella gave her dramatic testimony... A homeless man was standing in the back of the church, listening intently. At the end of the evening meeting I sat down on the edge of the platform, exhausted, as others continued to pray with those who had responded to Christ. The organist was playing quietly. I wanted to relax. I was just starting to unwind when I looked up to see this man, with shabby clothing and matted hair, standing in the center aisle about four rows back and waiting for permission to approach me. I nodded and gave him a weak little wave of my hand. Look at how this Easter Sunday is going to end, I thought to myself. He's going to hit me up for money. That happens often in this church. I'm so tired... When he came close, I saw that his two front teeth were missing. But more striking was his odor—the mixture of alcohol, sweat, urine, and garbage took my breath away. I have been around many street people, but this was the strongest stench I have ever encountered. I instinctively had to turn my head sideways to inhale, then look back in his direction while breathing out. I asked his name. "David," he said softly. "How long have you been homeless, David?" "Six years." "Where did you sleep last night?" "In an abandoned truck." I had heard enough and wanted to get this over quickly. I reached for the money clip in my back pocket. At that moment David put his finger in front of my face and said, "No, you don't understand—I don't want your money. I'm going to die out there. I want the Jesus that red-haired girl talked about." I hesitated, then closed my eyes. God, forgive me, I begged. I felt soiled and cheap. Me, a minister of the Gospel ... I had wanted simply to get rid of him, when he was crying out for the help of Christ I had just preached about. I swallowed hard as God's love flooded my soul (Ed: The filling of the Spirit returned to Pastor Cymbala the moment he confessed his sin of indifference to this man's true need! And the same dynamic can happen in our life beloved. Confess and repent. Do it quickly. Don't continue to grieve or quench the Spirit!). David sensed the change in me (Ed: Spirit controlled!). He moved toward me and fell on my chest, burying his grimy head against my white shirt and tie. Holding him close, I talked to him about Jesus' love. These weren't just words; I felt them. I felt love for this pitiful young man. And that smell... I don't know how to explain it. It had almost made me sick, but now it became the most beautiful fragrance to me. I reveled in what had been repulsive just a moment ago. The Lord seemed to say to me in that instant, Jim, if you and your wife have any value to me, if you have any purpose in my work—it has to do with this odor. This is the smell of the world I died for. David surrendered to the Christ he heard about that night. We got him into a hospital detoxification unit for a week. We got his teeth fixed. He joined the Prayer Band right away. He spent the next Thanksgiving Day in our home. We invited him back for Christmas as well. I will never forget his present to me. Inside a little box was one handkerchief. It was all he could afford. Today David heads up the maintenance department at the church, overseeing ten other employees. He is now married and a father. God is opening more and more doors for him to go out and give his testimony. When he speaks, his words have a weight and an impact that many ordained ministers would covet. As Christians reach out to touch everyone, including the unlovely who are now everywhere in our society, God touches them, too—and revolutionizes their lives.

There used to be a telephone commercial that said "Reach out and touch someone" (referring to the touch tone phones). In the spiritual world, Jude is calling for the church to contend earnestly for the faith by first fortifying your faith and then by practicing your faith by reaching out and touching those who others might deem untouchable. God grant that His church in America is energized by His Spirit to be such a church for sake of the Name above all names, Christ Jesus. Amen.

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#### **Other illustrations related to rescuing the perishing.**

**Vance Havner** once said "When people do not mean business with Christ in their hearts they will not do business for Christ with their hands. There is no place in Scripture for the type of church member who sings, "O How I Love Jesus," but feeds no sheep; who sings, "Rescue the Perishing," but does no rescue work himself." In his book **Consider Jesus** Havner adds "We shrink from personally touching the world's need, we abhor the ceremonial defilement of going down into the mire and muck of the world ourselves. It is one thing to sing, "Rescue the perishing." It is another thing to rescue some of them, snatching them from the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

**ILLUSTRATION** - Dwight L. Moody once saw a man freezing to death on the street in Chicago. Moody could not just talk this man into warmth. He pounded him with his fist and got him really angry. The man began to pound back and then got up and ran after Moody. That got his blood circulating and saved his life. Our loud and outspoken witnessing may make people angry, but at least it

may awaken them from their spiritual stupor. Who needs your boldness, your compassion today?

**ILLUSTRATION** - Those we save, says Jude, are as if snatched from the fire. They must be treated as we would treat a hamburger patty that falls into the hot coals. We must reach in quickly to prevent its further contamination, but we must also guard against personal injury.

**ILLUSTRATION** - Evangelism is like strong horseradish: people praise it with tears in their eyes. There are other word associations we could make with the concept of evangelism. For some people, evangelism is an evangelical mugging mission, where we go into a phone booth, come out with a big red S on our chests and charge out into a neighborhood, seldom our own, to win it for Christ. For others, it's some kind of evangelical ambush where we lure the honest, unsuspecting victim to some type of an event, lock the doors, and sing twenty-two verses of "Just as I Am." Some people think of evangelism as a bombing mission where, from protective cloud cover at 30,000 feet, we fill backyards with gospel bombs. For others, evangelism is herding fish into the stained glass aquarium where the big fisherman throws the lure from the pulpit. —Joseph Aldrich

**ILLUSTRATION** - When my wife and I went to Dallas Seminary, we decided we wouldn't live in the "cemetery" housing. Instead, we lived in the high-class, red-light district. If you want to get an introduction to life itself, that's the place to be. We made a commitment to take one non-Christian person, couple or individual, out to dinner once a week. Did we ever get a liberal education. But what fun; we had people coming to know the Lord right and left in that place, because we simply loved them. We opened our home to them. —Joseph Aldrich

**ILLUSTRATION** - Arithmetic from Hell - A kind of arithmetic has been spawned in the counting rooms of hell. This kind of arithmetic is always interested in reaching the masses but somehow never gets down to a man or a woman. This kind of arithmetic always talks about winning the world for God but doesn't think much about winning a neighborhood for God. That arithmetic makes it valiant to cross oceans and never really crosses streets. - Haddon Robinson

**ILLUSTRATION OF THE RESCUE TUBE** - Have you ever noticed that when the life guards at the pool are seated on the guard tower, they will have in their lap (if they are following regulations) a 3-4 foot firm rubber structure known as a "**rescue tube**." What's the function? To rescue a drowning victim. One way to do so is to hold the rescue tube out to the distressed swimmer (assuming they are close enough to the edge of the pool), instructing them to grab the rescue tube and slowly pulling the victim to safety.

**ILLUSTRATION** - John Wesley was a young child when there was a consuming fire that struck the parsonage where his entire family lived. John called for help from the second floor. After heroic efforts, John was rescued and from that point on considered himself "a brand plucked from the burning" (Zech. 3:2). This event gave him a sense of God's providence in his life and produced a deep passion and sense of purpose. His personal deliverance from the flames led to a passion for others and their salvation.

**TRAGIC STORY OF DAWSON TROTMAN FOUNDER OF THE NAVIGATORS** - On the afternoon of June 18, 1956, ten people who were attending a Christian conference in upstate New York were speeding in a power boat across Schroon Lake. Suddenly a wave struck the boat, hurtling two of its occupants into the water. The man held the young girl's head above the water while the boat circled back to them. Just as she was lifted to safety, **her rescuer sank beneath the waters and disappeared from sight.** The man who thus died saving the life of a girl whose name he did not know was Dawson E. Trotman, founder and director of The Navigators, designer of the counseling and follow-up program used by Evangelist Billy Graham. In his thirty years of service for Christ he had been used to bring back into focus for the Christian world some foundational New Testament truths, the influence of which had only begun to be felt during his own lifetime. His close personal friend and co-laborer Billy Graham said, "I think Dawson Trotman touched more lives than any man I have ever known. We today are only representatives of thousands of many races and languages and cultures that have been touched by this great man... **There could not have been a more dramatic and characteristic way to die. He who spent all of his life in bringing salvation and upbuilding to others... spending his last moments in saving the life of one who could not swim.**" ([The Pathfinder: A Condensed Life Story of Dawson E. Trotman by Lorne C. Sanny](#))

Here is another version of the tragic drowning of **Dawson Trotman** entitled **ALWAYS HOLDING SOMEONE UP** - The July 2, 1956 issue of the Time Magazine in its opening paragraph of the article entitled "Religion: The Navigator" was as follows – "Dawson Trotman clambered back into a motorboat one day last week after two hours of waterskiing on Schroon Lake, N.Y. He was dog-tired, but before he settled down he asked one of the two girls in the boat, Allene Beck, if she could swim; when she shook her head, he traded places with her so she would be in a safer spot. Minutes later the speeding boat bounced on a wave, and both of them, the 50-year-old man and the girl, shot into the water. He swam to her and held her head above water until the boat could circle back and she was hauled aboard. But as hands reached down to seize Trotman's hand, he sank out of sight." Dawson Trotman died by drowning, as he saved the life of another in the throes of death. The caption under his picture in the article appropriately summed up his life as it read "Always Holding Someone Up." The article also aptly concluded with "He lived to save others" and "His death was just the way he would have planned it." ([Always Holding Someone Up](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - A man in Sussex, England, gives this testimony: "I believe I can attribute my conversion, through the grace of God, to one verse of that precious hymn, '**Rescue the perishing.**' I was far away from my Saviour, and living without a hope in Jesus. I was very fond of singing hymns, and one day I came across this beautiful piece, and when I had sung the words, 'Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vibrate once more,' I fell upon my knees and gave my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. From that hour I have followed him who, through this verse, touched my heart and made it vibrate with his praises ever since."

**ILLUSTRATION** - Here is an example of demonstration of compassion to the perishing from Fanny Crosby's autobiography, in the chapter entitled "**Work Among Missions**" (shelters in cities where the destitute would accumulate) - "One evening there was a man in the seat in front of me, and from his singing I judged that he was under conviction (**Ed Comment:** Remember that Fanny was blind and so clearly had a keen sense of hearing to be able to detect a man's "heart conviction" just by his singing! Lord, give us all sensitive ears like Fanny! Amen). Something within prompted me to ask him (**Ed Comment:** Surely this was the Spirit of Jesus within her, another voice to which she clearly had developed exquisite sensitivity! God help us all to have such sensitivity to Your still small voice. Amen) if he would remain and hear the sermon, and he finally consented to do so. Just before the close of the address I whispered, "When the invitation is given, will you go to the altar?" For a moment he hesitated, and then asked, "Will you go with me?" I did go to the altar with him and had the pleasure of seeing him a saved man. I could give more than one instance where men have been reclaimed, after a long struggle and many attempts at reformation, because someone spoke a kind word to them even at what appeared to be the last moment. I have also know many others who turned away from a meeting simply because the cheering word had not been spoken, nor the helping hand extended. Never to chide the erring has always been my policy, for I firmly believe that harsh words only serve to harden hearts that might otherwise be softened into repentance. (see her verses below -- and notice she does not say not to reprove, but to take care how we reprove! Interesting!) " ([Fanny J Crosby: An Autobiography](#))

Speak not harshly when reproving

Those from duty's path who stray;

if you would reclaim the erring,

Kindness must each action sway.

Speak not harshly to the wayward;

Win their confidence, their love,

They will feel how pure the motive

That has led them to reprove.