

In the past few months, you’ve heard me occasionally mention “the me-bubble.” Before today, it has never actually been typed into a sermon, but I think of it often. Nearly every time it comes up, I’m sort of preaching to myself on things I want to improve. Basically, it is a visual representation of simple terms we know well: “Selfishness” or “Self-Centeredness.”

It is the idea of assigning values based on one primary question: what does this mean to me? So, things, events, ideas around me are only valuable if they benefit me. People, and time with people, and doing things with people, are only important if such are important to me or for me.

In it’s mildest, or thinnest form, the me-bubble simply renders relationships less than what they ought to be. I mean, how can my relationship with God be what it should be if all my interaction with Him and actions related to Him are based upon what I want or what benefits me the most?

And how can my relationships be rich if little focus is invested in the other person or the group? If all I see is me and my benefit, and others do the same, how can that work? Example – two me-bubblers having a conversation – just two monologues with little true interaction.

At it’s most extreme, in its thickest form, this can become very dangerous.

Jude 3-4 – People, even among God’s people, who just only care about themselves and their flesh. They look to be sensual when the opportunity rises and just can’t really care what God wants.

Jude 12-13 – They can live among God’s people and look the part, but they are “caring for themselves.”

Jude 16 – They grumble at anything that doesn’t serve them and everything is about their advantage.

That’s kind of scary isn’t it? This isn’t just a selfish attitude, this is a narcissistic danger to our family. I am by no means saying there is anyone in the room in this category. This extreme case only serves as a warning as to where self-centeredness can lead if left unattended, or unacknowledged.

Well, as with many things, taking a minute to identify, to really get a grasp, on the problem, can help us tremendously. For that, I want to suggest one verse from this chapter. I think if someone asked me last week: “*what is that bubble made of?*” I might have said, “*well, selfishness or sadness.*” But now, I would say, “*grab your Bible and check out Jude 11.*”

1. “The Way of Cain” (Genesis 4)

- a. **4:4-5** – Cain offered what Cain wanted. And he got angry when things didn’t go his way.
- b. **4:6-8** – He couldn’t hear God or listen. He was caught up in his emotions. He kills Abel.
- c. **4:9** – Even afterward, who is he thinking of here? Himself!
- d. **4:13** – Still not concerned with God’s emotion or his family – only his own punishment.
- e. So, the bubble is made up of *doing it my way and get mad when at others when it doesn’t work, and not listen to what others say, and just look out for myself, and whoa is me when I get punished for my actions.* YIKES!

2. “The Error of Balaam” (Numbers 22)

- a. Firstly, note in our text that “for pay” they did this. Greed and self gain is the motivation.
- b. **Revelation 2:14** – Balaam made God’s people more worldly in order to get paid.
- c. **Numbers 22:18-19** – Committed to God, but a nagging desire to find another way.
- d. **Numbers 22:22** – God was angry. It nearly cost Balaam his life.
- e. *So, the bubble here is related to greed, to money. It feels the pressure to obey God, but can’t shake the desire to get for self, and even went so far as to give advice that made God’s people weaker as a way of looking out for number 1.*

3. “The Rebellion of Korah” (Numbers 16)

- a. **16:1-3** – Jealous of Moses’ position, Korah can’t see things clearly. He’s accusational.
- b. **16:8-11** – Korah can’t see the blessings he has, only himself compared to others.
- c. **16:19** – Korah isn’t logical or rational. He is against Moses still. He’s blinded by greed.
- d. **16:31-33** – Sadly, desire for self led to self demise ... but it hurt others as well.

- e. *So, the bubble is made up of jealousy, and a lack of appreciation for others, and a lack of appreciation for what you have, and the inability to see things clearly, and danger of the wrath of God for me and everyone in and/or around my bubble. YIKES!*

Now, if you can identify with any or all of these characters, do not fret. It is not the end of the world. In fact, it may be the beginning of the rest of your life – and a better life - a less me-focused life, a more healthy, happy and godly life. But sometimes getting there begins with acknowledgement of issues.

I will not use the rest of our time talking about how bad this stuff is and how we should quit it. We can do better than that. Instead, I want you to see how Jude addresses the issue. Late in his short letter, he lays out a plan to do TWO things: 1) change those people if they would listen and 2) help us pursue a path that will lead us away from such people.

A Seven Day Challenge – for each of these, do something this week expressly for the benefit of another. Make that conversation, that interaction, that action – about them – i.e. the church, the Holy Spirit, one living in doubt of their faith. Determine the value of the action by what it means to and does for them.

Jude 19-23

1. “Building yourselves up in the most holy faith”
 - a. First, think US. You get to be in the new bubble, but so does this whole church family.
 - b. Start thinking in terms of “what makes us stronger?” “What helps my Christian family?”
 - c. **Philippians 2:1-4** – Find something that is purely for the good of our this local work?
2. “praying in the Holy Spirit”
 - a. Often times even our prayers can become very me-oriented.
 - b. Praying in connection with the Spirit begins by acknowledging the Spirit’s presence.
 - c. **Galatians 5:22-23** – It sees these things in Him, for us, and seeks to emulate them.
3. “keep yourselves in the love of God”
 - a. I love the wording. Its not me and trying to keep God here in connection with me.
 - b. It is Him and His Love and His Kindness as the center and I seek to connect to it.
 - c. **I John 5:1-3** – Stop waiting on things to come to you – keep yourself there in His love.
4. “wait anxiously for the... Lord Jesus Christ”
 - a. You ever had to wait for someone to get to the table before you ate. Me bubble people can’t. They must eat now. But Christians can delay and deny self in waiting for Him.
 - b. Christians have their minds on Jesus. They imagine His glory, coming, worthiness.
 - c. **II Peter 3:11-13** – Its not about me & now – It’s about Him and later -huge thought shift!

This list of four is good for each person here. It helps me shift the focus from me and make my thoughts, words, actions and intentions about others and for the glory of God. However, this kindof just looks like a bigger bubble: maybe we call it an “Us-Bubble” – all of us nice and godly Deity and disciples.

The rest of this list says: No Bubbles! No comfort “Me-Zones” – even ones with others in it. This says, “this life is about seeing every person and every situation as a chance to help other people: even sinners.

5. “have mercy on some, who are doubting”
 - a. **Galatians 6:1-2** – Maybe among our own are some drifting. They need our attention.
6. “save others, snatching them from the fire”
 - a. Not sure if this is the wayward Christian or the lost person – but its about THEM!
7. “on some have mercy with fear”
 - a. **I Peter 2:12** – Even among the ungodly, our conduct is intended to perhaps help them.

Jude 24-25 - “TO HIM” – that’s the key. To understand that everything I have to say, to do, to give, to be – is TO HIM. To His glory, to His honor, and eventually To His face – that’s how you pop this bubble for good. When it is TO HIM you will repent to please Him, you will be baptized to obey Him, you will serve others, in His name, and unto His great pleasure. Who is ready to make it about Him?