

Jude – A Warning for the Body of Christ

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We're going to do the book of Jude tonight. So, open your Bible to the New Testament book of Jude. If you don't know where Jude is located, I'll tell you it's the very, well, it's the last book right before you get to the book of Revelation. So, if you go to the very end of your Bible and then start coming backwards, you're going to go through Revelation and then the book right before that is Jude. And it's a short letter, as we saw with 2 and 3 John, but this is also a short letter written by a very different person. And we're going to get into it tonight. See what the Lord has for us this evening.

So, heavenly Father, as we open our hearts to this, your word tonight, we pray that you would be with us and that you would help us, and that you administer grace tonight in our heart. That we would hear from you this evening, Lord, because that's what we need to do.

You know these people who are gathered here and listening online, they don't need to hear from me. They need to hear from you. They need your voice, your truth, your wisdom, your insight, your understanding, your love. And I pray that tonight, that they would hear that, that we all would hear.

Open us up, Lord, to what you want to say. Just I thank you so much that we can come together like this. Thank you for the opportunity. Lord, thank you for the freedom in our country that still exists for us to gather like this, in this place freely, and to talk about the word of God, and to go through the scriptures. And we're so, so thankful, Lord, that is still the situation.

We know that there are places in the world where gathering like this could be very dangerous. We ask you, Father God, to protect that right that we have here in this country to do that. And we ask you, Lord, to minister your grace tonight, and we ask it in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. The letter of Jude is a powerful one, even though it is, as I said, fairly short.

Jude, as we get into this, you're going to see that Jude wanted to write to the people to whom he was writing about the faith that we have in Jesus. But he instead decided or felt compelled, I suppose we should say, to sound a warning.

Because of individuals who had made their way into the body of Christ and we're presenting spiritual threats, to those who were in the body.

And he is going to use many examples to make his point in this very short letter. He will speak of examples from nature, examples from the Old Testament, in fact the book of Jude is one that's going to test your Old Testament knowledge. You can tell that Jude is writing to people who have an Old Testament understanding.

And it is important to have a grasp on what happens in the Old Testament in order to really get a real sense of what's going on here in Jude, but he encourages in this letter, the faithful to hold fast to the truth of the gospel as they were taught it. Now, the author is, as we said, identifies himself here as Jude, which by the way, was a very popular Jewish name.

There are no fewer than seven mentions of an individual, a different individual named Jude in the New Testament. Whether it is mentioned as Jude or Judas or Judah, they're all the same name and or I should say variations on the same name. And it was very popular. The Hebrew pronunciation would've been Ye-hu-da.

And this was the name of the individual writing this letter. Now, you'll notice in verse one, the author introduces himself by name saying, "*Jude (and he says), a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James.*" And the first thing I want you to notice about Jude is that he says, I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the ESV doesn't really do, I think the best job of translating this word that is translated here in the ESV as servant, because this is that Greek word *dolos*, which we've talked about many times in the past, which could be translated slave, although that doesn't really do it justice. It is literally a word that described a servant slave that decided their master was worthy of lifelong service.

And you'll remember that this sort of a servant slave is talked about actually in the Old Testament. And when a servant wanted to stay with their master for life, the master would take the servant to a place where he would pierce their ear.

And that piercing would be the sign that this individual had taken this role as a servant slave. And this was done because the servant or the slave determined that their master was someone they could trust and they wanted to stay with, and they wanted to stay with them for life.

Now that's particularly interesting in light of the fact that Jude also identifies himself here in verse one as the brother of James. Now, you'll notice that, but he's not referring to the Apostle James, and we know that because James the apostle was the first of the apostles to be martyred. You'll remember that Herod cut his head off. And so this is long after that. So this James is the half-brother of Jesus, who is in fact the leader of the church in Jerusalem at this time.

That means that Jude is also the half-brother of Jesus and one of the four sons of Mary and Joseph, and you'll remember that they are actually listed other than of course, Jesus. The Sons of Mary and Joseph are James, Joseph, Simon and Jude. And there were sisters as well, but they were unnamed in the gospel accounts.

Anyway, I bring this up because here's Jude, who's been raised in the same home as Jesus and we don't know where he came in necessarily in that line, but he knew his brother, as just that, a brother for a long time. But eventually he came to know him as the Lord Jesus Messiah, and not just the Messiah but his master, the one to whom he belonged, the one to whom he had devoted himself for life as a *doulos*, a servant slave.

It's kind of crazy, isn't it? We know from the gospels that there was a progression with the brothers of Jesus to the point where they came to believe because and we know that they didn't believe at first, we're told as much. In fact, let me put this up on the screen for you from John chapter 7.

It says: ² *Now the Jews' Feast of Booths was at hand.* ³ *So his brothers said to him,*

(that is talking to Jesus)

“Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.”

(and then there is this comment from John)

⁵ *For not even his brothers believed in him.”*

So, we know that at this point in Jesus's earthly ministry, his brothers did not believe, but we know that at least two of them did come to believe. In fact, we know that James received a personal appearance of the resurrected Jesus. after his death, of course. And how Jude actually came to the Lord we don't know.

But here, this, I just find this interesting, even though Jude is a blood relative, he doesn't start his letter by saying, Jude, a blood relative of Jesus Christ, I mean that would be something fairly impressive.

But what does he say?

Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and that speaks of his own humility and his understanding of who Jesus is. Now, he goes on as we continue with verse one, Jude lists the recipients of the letter; he says, *"to those who are called beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ."*

You'll notice that there are three descriptive words that are used here that Jude describes his audience by, and they are words that are applicable to those of us here tonight going through this study. He says, we are Called, Beloved and Kept. Isn't that great? I could, I could say that to you. I'd say, well, good evening, all you who are Called, Beloved and Kept.

What do we mean by called? It simply means someone who's been invited. To be called is to be invited. The word beloved simply means deeply loved, and that is you too. You are deeply loved by the Lord. And then finally, the word kept means to be watched over or guarded, and that is you as well. You are currently being watched over and guarded by the Lord. In fact, James is going to have more to say about that at the end of this letter.

But again, I want to remind you that all those words describe every true believer. And then comes the greeting, which was typical in letters of this time. He says, *"²May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you."*

And then Jude gets into the crux of his letter by saying, *"³Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."*

You can see here that even though Jude wanted to just simply write about our life in Christ, because that's what's fun. When I'm teaching, that's the fun part, to talk to you about what it is to be a Christian and how we walk out and live out our Christian faith.

But every so often I have to say, you know what, as I'm teaching a passage, I have to go in and tell you about all the junk, that has been added on to the word of God and the bad teachings and the misunderstandings and things like that. And I have to say, some of you might have been raised with such and such a

teaching, and that's not true. And we have to go through and do those things from time to time. And that's what Jude is doing here.

He says I wanted to write to you about your faith, but I felt it necessary to write appealing to you, to contend. And that word contend is a strong one. In the Greek it was used among athletes. It literally meant to agonize, speaking of challenging work.

And so, when Jude talks about contending for the faith, he's talking about very challenging work. And not only that, but the tense of this Greek word is in the continuous tense, meaning that whatever contending we need to do for the gospel needs to be ongoing. In other words, we're never going to get done, we're never going to be done contending for the faith.

There's always going to be a tax on the Christian gospel. There's always going to be a tax on the word of God, and we are constantly contending for that word. And of course, the natural question arises is what are the reasons? Jude doesn't give the reasons, rather that we are to contend for the faith. So, you might ask, what is... why should we do it? What is important about it that we need to do it?

Well, first of all, the truth is valuable, and that's why we contend for the truth of the gospel. It's valuable. You say, well, how valuable? Well, the Apostle Paul talked about the gospel. He said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel it's the power of God for salvation.

But there's something else that the truth of God's word does in our lives. Let me show you a statement that Jesus made from John chapter 8, verse 32. He said, *“³²...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (ESV)*

We're living in a world where people are constantly bound up in deception, they're bound up in lies.

And when we hear the truth of God's word, it literally causes the shackles to fall away in our lives and it sets us free.

So, one of the reasons we contend for the truth of the gospel is, well, yes, it's the power of God for salvation, and it sets us free, and that's an important thing. But there's a second reason that we contend for the gospel, and that is, as we've already mentioned, it is constantly under attack.

But I want you to notice that Jude doesn't exhort us to contend for the truth in general. He doesn't say, I exhort you to contend for the truth. He says, I exhort you to contend for the gospel, and there's a difference there. And it's important to understand that difference. I there are a lot of Christians right now on social media, they're using social media to contend for the truth.

And so, they bring up obviously a lot of comments on various areas that are going on in our society and our culture that are contrary to truth. Because truth is a very precious thing, and God has given us truth in the Word of God. And I love truth. I, as a pastor and teacher I love the truth.

But do you know, it's interesting, we 're never told to contend for the truth. I'm not saying that it's wrong, it's not mine to judge whether or not these people that are contending for the truth online are doing what the Lord has told them to do. That's between them and the Lord, and believe me, there's no shortage of untruths and false information for us to address in the world today. Whether it has to do with marriage or gender or creation or the many things that are being turned on their head in our culture today.

There's a lot of things to contend for as it relates to that, but Jude is telling us to contend for the gospel. The truth of the gospel.

So now we have to ask the question, what is the truth of the gospel? In other words, what are we contending for specifically? Well, I thought of some areas, in fact, I thought of six of them.

I'll put them up on the screen here for you...as far as contending for the faith of the gospel.

(Slide)

- The Person of Jesus Christ.
- The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- The resurrection.
- The means by which we are saved.
- The calling of believers to be set apart for Jesus.

- The blessed hope of our Lord's return.

Well, part of that's contending related to the person of Jesus Christ contending for the truth because you see the gospel falls apart without a biblical understanding of who Jesus is, knowing who he is, understanding his deity.

And that is critical.

Next, it's what Jesus did on the cross, the sacrifice that he made there. There's a lot of untruth related to what Jesus did or didn't do on the cross, and we contend for the reality of the fact that Jesus bore our sacrifice, on the cross, he literally became sin for us. That's contending for the gospel right.

Next, we contend for the idea of resurrection. The Apostle Paul talks about the resurrection in his letters to the Corinthians, and he says, if Jesus hasn't been raised from the dead, we're lost. It's a done deal, there's nothing for us to hope in or hope for, if Christ has not been raised from the dead. So, we contend because that's part and parcel of the gospel.

We contend for what it means in terms of the means by which we are saved. And that means, you know what saves you because there's a lot of false teaching going on about how we're saved, how Christians, what they have to do to be saved. There's a lot of teaching that is just flat out wrong. Some people say You got to keep the Sabbath. Some people say you got to be baptized in water. Some people say you got to speak in tongues and there's all these things. Some people say you've got to be a good person. There are churches that teach that you're saved by a free gift of God, but you have to live a good life to keep yourself saved. And that's just another name for salvation by works.

So, there's all these things that we have to contend for the truth of the gospel related to the means by which we are saved. We believe, as the Bible says, we're saved by grace through faith. It's by faith, by putting our faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

That's the truth of the gospel. We contend for the calling of believers to be set apart for Jesus. We're going to see as Jude gets into this letter that one of the things that these false teachers were talking about grace as a license for immorality. And that has happened, and it does happen, even today.

It's okay, God will forgive you. He's a God of forgiveness, a God of grace, and grace is used as a license for sin, and we contend that's not the case. We're called to live our life unto the Lord to please him and not to please self.

And then finally, we contend for what the Bible calls the blessed hope, which is the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to this earth.

The Bible says he's coming back and he's going to come back in two stages. Essentially, the Bible says he's first, he's going to come for his bride, the body of Christ, and then he's going to come to earth. And fight on behalf of Israel in that battle that we refer to in the Bible as Armageddon. So, but these are, this is where our hope is. This is the truth of the gospel. The gospel message is not just John 3:16. It goes far beyond that. And it covers the things that we're seeing here on the screen. And so, Jude says, I'm exhorting you that we might contend for these things.

Now, next in verse four and following, Jude's going to speak of the attacks that were happening at that time.

He says in this verse, *"For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality (there it is) and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."*

We're going to talk about these things, the charges that Jude brings against these false teachers. But the first thing Jude says about this, and this is probably the most dangerous of all, is that they've crept in unnoticed. Did you catch that? He, it's some, it's an interesting thing about, people who come to cause trouble and be deceivers and false teachers and so forth. They never walked through the door with a sign on that says, I'm a trouble.

In fact, they come sounding and looking just like believers. In fact, that's, Jesus told us that's how people would make their way into the church. They would be wolves in sheep's clothing. And so, they come in and, we extend the right hand of fellowship to people based on just their word.

And you know what? I will never stop doing that. The, one of the worst things we can do in the body of Christ is start to get bitter and suspicious of people when they walk in the door and look at them sideways. Like, you here to be good or you here to be disobedient and cause trouble.

We're not going to do; we're never going to do that. We're always going to extend the right hand of fellowship because that's what we do. And we trust that the Lord is going to bring these things to the forefront and going to bring discernment and wisdom as we continue to pray and teach the word. I have to tell you something, I've been doing this now for 32 years at this church, and I'll

tell you, we have very little trouble with troublemakers over those years. And I attribute that to teaching the Bible chapter by chapter verse by verse. I really do. Going through the whole Bible Genesis to Revelation and seeing and hearing and understanding and learning about the whole council of God's word, there's balance there.

When you have a church where they're not teaching through the whole Bible, they're just fixated on a particular genre of passages, maybe whether they're spiritual gifts or whatever, imbalance can enter into that thing, that people can prey upon. And the enemy's just waiting to prey upon imbalance.

And so, the more we spread it out and have the balance of the whole council of God's word, the safer our environment is going to be. That's not to say we haven't had issues in the past. There have been issues, but I'm saying they're lessened by teaching through the whole Bible.

But notice that Jude goes on here. Here we're still in verse four, he says that these people are designated, they were designated for this condemnation, meaning that their ungodliness has created their destiny. And then he mentions two charges. That he levels against them. One, he says they pervert the grace of God into sensuality.

And secondly, he says they deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ. And the first one means they take grace as a means of approving sinful behavior. We talked about that already. The second charge is that they deny the deity of Jesus Christ, and that's a charge. We have to hang on, we have to contend for the deity of Jesus.

And this is one of the things that they were doing. Now, as Jude continues, he's going to cite examples of God's judgment, and he's doing this to comfort the believers for them to know and understand that God is going to take care of these sorts of things. God is going to work out these things, and God is able to bring judgment upon the ungodly.

And the first example he's going to give here. Is the judgment that fell upon, those from the nation of Israel who walked in unbelief as Israel was being brought through the wilderness. Verse 5 says, *"⁵Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe."*

Now, I, there's a couple of things I want to bring out from this verse. First of all, I don't know if you have a different Bible translation that you're reading from

tonight on your lap, but if you do have a different one, like the New American Standard Bible or the New King James, your Bible is going to say The Lord who saved a people out of Egypt.

It's interesting that the ESV, which I'm reading from here tonight, is somewhat unique in that it follows some early manuscripts that actually include the name of Jesus here and credits him with delivering the people of Israel out of Egypt. It speaks of the Lord Jesus by name as bringing them out of their bondage.

But the point of verse 5 is that some of the people who were delivered out of the bondage of Egypt continued in unbelief and ended up being destroyed in their unbelief. And you'll remember from the Old Testament when the nation of Israel got, after two years, got to the border of Israel, they sent spies into the land and spent time in the land spying it out.

And you'll remember that some of the spies came back with a bad report, and it caused the people to basically kind of go into a tail. And as it relates to their faith, and those people were destroyed. They fell dead in the desert over the next 38 years. And so, Jude is reminding his readers of the fact that God is able to take care of these sorts of situations.

He gives another example in verse 6, he says, *"⁶And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day."*

Now the letter of Jude, I'll just tell you right now, is kind of well-known for raising points that are fairly unique and even somewhat controversial.

And this is one of them. Jude is kind of making us aware of the fact that some of the angels, and we don't know how many angels even fell. We believe that Satan carried off a third of the angels, but that doesn't help us because we don't know what the total number was, but obviously it was a fairly large number.

But some of the angels, some of the fallen angels become demons, if you will, were immediately incarcerated as Jude says here. In eternal chains under gloomy darkness, and this would describe the abyss. So they are, there are some fallen angels who are even now in the abyss and apparently not all of the angels were put there.

Probably just the ones that were capable of doing the most damage. Some of the angels were allowed to roam free in the spirit realm. And we see lots of them in

the New Testament investing themselves in human hosts and needing to be cast out, which Jesus and the disciples did on a fairly regular basis.

In fact, you'll remember that when Jesus made his way to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to the area referred to as the Gerasenes, they were met up with a man who lived among the tombs. And this man was so wild and out of control that nobody could keep a lid on. He would, he lived in the tombs. They tried to tie him up they couldn't, he couldn't be bound, and nobody could help him. And when Jesus got there, he dealt with that man, you'll remember, but before he cast the demons out of that man, you'll recall that they begged Jesus not to cast them into the abyss. And it would seem very likely that the abyss is what Jude is describing here in verse 6, where some of the angels are kept and they didn't want to be there, and they begged not to go there.

Now, regarding the Abyss, we know from the book of Revelation that there is coming a time during the great tribulation when the abyss is going to be opened up and all of the hellish demons that have been kept there in chains for all this time will be released upon the earth during this time. And it will be, it'll be a terrible time.

At the end of the tribulation, Satan himself will be bound once again in the abyss for a thousand years and then released one last time to make trouble on the earth. But that gives you kind of a little bit of background about some of what's going on here. And by the way, this reference to the angels who did not stay within their positions of authority, there are many Bible scholars, I'll just tell you, who believe that these are the angels that were involved with the daughters of men, as it is talked about in Genesis chapter 6, who actually procreated with them.

I don't know about that. I struggle with that. It's just there's not enough information for us to just absolutely say for sure.

Who the sons of God, were in Genesis chapter 6 and one of the things that leads me to have big question mark is that angels don't have the ability to procreate. They're just not plumbed that way, but how they, they might have gotten involved with the sons of men to do that. I don't know.

I don't know. I'm just throwing that out to tell you that is one possible explanation.

But again, the point of all of this is from Jude to his readers is God is just and he's not going to overlook rebellion. That's the whole point, right?

And then the third example that he gives is in verse seven, where he says, "*7just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, served as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*"

And now he's relating to us another Old Testament story, which is given to us in Genesis chapter 19 of the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Abraham's nephew Lot had been residing. And again, this is a vivid example of God's promise of judgment to those who blatantly and deliberately defy His word, rejecting His offer of forgiveness and living that, that life of just total depravity as we read in Genesis 19. So again, the point is just being made, God is able to judge.

Verse 8: "*8Yet (Jude writes) in like manner these people also (and now he's talking about the false teachers and the apostate who've made their way into the body of Christ. He says), these people also, relying on their dreams (or these dreamers, if you will, as the NIV says), defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.*"

Notice the three things, they defile the flesh, reject authority. He'll talk more about that in a minute and blasphemed the glorious ones. Who are the glorious ones? Well, we learned from the second letter of Peter that the glorious ones are referenced to fallen angels. Interestingly enough it's, it is wild that they should be called that.

Let me, but let me show you this 2 Peter on the screen it says,

2 Peter 2:10-11 (ESV)

10 "and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.

Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones,

(There's the same reference that Jude makes)

11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord."

He's saying, Peter is saying that even the angels are obedient to God. Do not blaspheme them and speak such judgment or pronounce judgments against the fallen angels. But these people, these false teachers go around doing it and they

talk a lot to demons. I don't know if you guys have ever been part of a church where they talk a lot to demons. They're constantly talking to demons. They're constantly speaking to demons, and they're doing it in ways that you might think are okay because they're in the name of Jesus, and, but they speak to the demons. And I kind of got a problem with that, to be honest with you.

It says that the angels of God, even though they're greater in might in power, Peter writes, they don't pronounce blasphemous judgments against the demons. In fact, it even cites an example as we go on here to read in Jude in verse 9, it says, *"⁹But when the archangel, Michael, (and by the way, that's the only angel we know of who is an archangel. We don't know if he's the only one, I doubt it. But it says when he was) contending with the devil, and was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"*

Now, this is a statement, and this is frankly a story that is not found in the Hebrews scriptures, it is more taken from Jewish tradition and, but we do know that God when it came time for Moses, to pass from this life. God told him it was time for him to die, and he took him up on a mountaintop, and there Moses died, and we were, we're told essentially that the Lord took care of the body of Moses and buried Moses.

But apparently, according to Jewish tradition, the enemy or the devil, if you will, was disputing, with the archangel, Michael, concerning the body of Moses. We don't know why. These are things we don't have any insight about. The point of all this is that Jude is simply saying that in this traditional story, that the archangel, Michael, did not presume to pronounce blasphemous judgments against the devil, but simply said the Lord rebuke you.

Anyway, Jude goes on verse 10, he says, *"¹⁰ But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively."*

So, this is the point here, just as the arch angel, Michael didn't dare to accuse the devil the false teachers do. They're constantly doing, they're speaking abusively against things, he says they don't understand. And so, he is bringing this charge against these leaders.

Now, in the next several verses, and we're going to go through these, fairly quickly, but Jude is going to use some very colorful and descriptive language to describe both the error and the danger of these people toward the body of Christ.

And he's going to do it by relating to several Old Testament stories, and this is frankly where it helps to have a good understanding of the Old Testament so that you know what he's saying; otherwise, if you don't know the Old Testament, this is going to be a little challenging.

Verse 11, he says, *“¹¹ Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.”*

Let me go through these very quickly, three different stories from the Old Testament, Judas relating to first the way of Cain, and he's talking about the son of Adam who killed his brother Abel because of jealousy and bitterness.

And he's essentially saying, these people are filled with jealousy and bitterness, and that's why they want your attention. He talks about the sake of gain to Balaam's error. Balaam was a diviner in the Old Testament. It's I believe it's in the book of Numbers where the King of Moab, a man by the name of Balak, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites.

And even though God told Balaam, don't do it, Balaam went anyway because he loved money more than obedience to God. And that's the point of the error of Balaam, he's simply saying their love of money is above and beyond their obedience to God.

And then he talks about that they have perished in Korah's rebellion. You'll remember that Korah was a man who challenged Moses and Aaron because of their leadership, he was an elder in the community of Israel, and he went to Moses and Aaron at one point and said, you guys take too much upon yourselves. You guys are, you think you're the big hooey of what's going on here, we're all just the same, and there's no reason why you should be elevated above us in any way.

And Moses, who was an extremely humble man got down on his face and he said, God chooses who He will, so we'll just leave this up to God. And you'll remember that God took care of Korah and his family. And so, Korah's Rebellion is well known for its inability, his inability to submit to authority.

He was just a rebellious man. He was one of those kinds of guys that you hear people talk about today that says, nobody's going to tell me...nobody's going to tell me what to do. I am master of my own life, and you can't tell me what to do. And it is just rebellion, and that's what Korah was like.

That's what Jude is saying that these apostates are about jealousy, bitterness, love of money and rejection of authority.

Verse 12. He says, *“¹² These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear,*

A hidden reef, as you probably know, was a rise in the land, under the surface of the water, and ships when they were coming into the shore would hit these reefs, but they wouldn't know that the reef was there, and the bow of the ship would get stuck on the reef, and usually the waves would pound on the ship; and many times, break it up. In fact, that happened to the Apostle Paul when he was being taken to Rome, that very thing happened.

A hidden reef is like an iceberg in the sense that there's danger below the surface of the water. He goes on to talk about them as shepherds feeding themselves. The function of a shepherd is to take care of the sheep and make sure they are well fed. He says these shepherds are only feeding themselves.

He says... *“shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds;”* they're waterless clouds swept along by winds. When the ground, when the ground rather, is parched and dry, and the clouds show up on the horizon, people rejoice. But if those clouds don't bring any rain, it's a great disappointment. And that's what Jude is saying about these men. They are just a huge disappointment. They promise a lot of things, but they deliver nothing.

He says they are... *“fruitless trees in late autumn, (bearing no fruit in other words) twice dead, uprooted;”* (in fact) *“¹³ wild waves of the sea,”*

The sea was considered to be a very troubling thing. We dealt with this in John here just recently in our Sunday morning study where the disciples were caught on the sea of Galilee in troubled seas. Very dangerous, very dangerous. That's what Jude is saying. These men are dangerous. He says they are... *“casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.*

Wandering stars seem to refer to the comets that dazzle and streak through the sky for a while, but eventually they disappear and go dark.

Verse 14. *“¹⁴ It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their*

deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Once again, Jude is giving a quotation from a non-biblical book. It's a book that doesn't appear in our Old Testament. Some believe it is taken from the non-biblical book of Enoch, which is Pseudepigraphal, there's a word for you. Write that one down. Pseudepigraphal means that it has a fake author, that the person who claims to have written the book is not in fact the true author. And that's why we call it pseudepigraphal; there you go.

But at the end of the day you know, you can see that what Jude is saying is simply making a point, about the continuing pronouncement of judgment upon the ungodly.

Verse 16. *“¹⁶ These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.”*

Wow, after all that, this is pretty heavy. I mean, you can tell that Jude was very serious about giving a warning about these individuals and that's why he goes on to say in verse 17 *“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.”*

And then that is in fact exactly what they said. In fact, it's exactly what Peter said, let me show you on the screen from 2 Peter, chapter 3.

2 Peter 3:3-4 (ESV)

“³ ...knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming?”

So, these were things that the apostles warned the body of Christ about.

He says in verse 19, *“¹⁹ It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.”* and that means they don't have the Holy Spirit in them because they're not saved. They have no desire to be saved. They essentially act like they're believers, but they're devoid of the spirit.

So here we go. Wow! *“²⁰ But you, (he says) 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.”

These are two very lovely verses.

But there are four things that Jude tells us here, and we'll put them up on the screen for you so you can see them. This is what he exhorts you and me. In the body of Christ.

(Slide)

- Build yourself up in the faith
- Pray in the Holy Spirit
- Keep yourselves in the love of God
- Wait for the mercy of our Lord

First of all, he says, build yourselves up in the faith. How do you do that? You do that through the word, you do it how we're, what we're doing right now. You go through less scriptures, you study the word of God. That's how you build yourself up in the faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.

So, what we're doing here is we're working out. It's really nice because we don't have to get sweaty and stink up the place. But we're working out, nonetheless. This is like, the word is like, spiritual weights, barbells, we're working out here. And he says, you need to keep doing that.

Next, he says, pray in the Holy Spirit. What do you suppose that means to pray in the Holy Spirit? There are different references in the Bible to praying. related to the Holy Spirit. We know that the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit will sometimes pray for us with groans the Bible says that words can't express. And there's a lot of people think that's speaking in tongues. It's not. That is just when you are beyond words and you're just face planted before the Lord, and you don't know what to say and crying out from your soul. There's a work of the Holy Spirit because you, your spirit is merged with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will actually pray for you in a very lovely sort of a way, and that's a wonderful thing. I don't think that's what Jude is talking about here. Now

there is also praying in the spirit. Now, Paul talks about that in 1 Corinthians chapter 14. You can read about that.

He says, I will pray with understanding or with my mind, and I will pray with my spirit. And he's talking about praying in his spirit or with the Holy Spirit, and that is speaking about praying in tongues. He's talking about praying in his prayer language, and that is a, that's another method of praying where an individual is allowing the Holy Spirit to take over their vocal cords, if you will, using a language that they've never learned and that is the gift of tongues. It is a gift that the Apostle Paul actually rebukes the Corinthians for abusing in their church, but he doesn't say this is not a genuine gift, and he doesn't say don't use it. In fact, he says to the Corinthians, I wish you guys spoken tongues as much as I do, but when you come together, knock off these spiritual calisthenics that you guys are doing. Because they were being ridiculous.

But the gift of tongues when used properly is a beautiful gift. It's a lovely gift. It is a gift whereby the Holy Spirit prays through the individual as an instrument, and it really is truly a beautiful thing, and if you want to know more about it, I would encourage you to go to my study in 1 Corinthians on our website, which is ccontario.com/1corinthians, and I've got some studies there on the gift of tongues, which is an important and one of the gifts, which by the way has not passed away, it is misused in the body of Christ. I get tons of letters from people who are in churches where the gift of tongues is being abused, and that is a terrible shame because it's a wonderful gift.

But you know what? We don't stop using things simply because they're abused. Everything's been abused the gospel's been abused, the truth gets abused every day. We don't cast it out because it's being abused, nor do we cast out the gifts of the spirit. I believe what Jude is referring to here, when he says pray in the Spirit, he's simply saying, pray according to the Spirit as the Spirit leads in your heart.

And that just simply means be led by the Holy Spirit in your prayer. You know you're to be led by the Holy Spirit in everything. You're going to be led by the Holy Spirit and your relationships and, but, and especially in your prayer, let the spirit lead you. Let the spirit guide you in your prayer time.

He says, also, keep yourselves in the love of God. Don't let go. Don't let go. Don't let go of the love of God. Keep yourselves there. Don't let the enemy see. this is where the enemy, he wants to get you outside of the love of God. He wants to get you to a place where you no longer believe God loves you, because he can paralyze you and you've got to keep yourselves in the understanding that

God loves you no matter what, He loves you, and He's not going to stop loving you.

And then finally he says, wait for the mercy of God. And this is all about patient endurance. Paul, or excuse me, John talks about this in the beginning of the book of Revelation.

He talks about the fact that he writes to the brothers, to those who are involved in the kingdom of God and the patient endurance that is ours in Christ Jesus. John says, we are patiently enduring. What are we enduring? Well, a world that's just going down the tubes, literally down the toilet, the world is on its way out.

And we see it and it grieves us. We are heartbroken and we're doing what we can to continue to be salt and light, but it's going to go this way. Paul told us this, the apostle Paul prophesied saying that in the last days it's going to, it's just going to get worse.

So, what's our calling?

We wait patiently for the mercy of God. He goes on to say *“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.”*

And I love these two verses because here Jude is giving us some directions on how to deal with people who are either weak in the faith or are total unbelievers.

He says three things. Let me put these on the screen.

(Slide)

- Have mercy on those who doubt.
- Save others by snatching them out of the fire.
- To others show mercy with fear.

Have mercy on those who doubt. There are a lot of Christians who are filled with doubt. He says don't be rough on them, have mercy. Be tender with people who are struggling with doubts.

Secondly, you're going to find people who are absolutely just going their own way. He says, save them by snatching them out of the fire, if at all possible, this is evangelism.

And by the way, this is a great description of the gift of evangelism. I see evangelists as doing just what he's saying, running into burning buildings, pulling people out and giving them mouth to mouth on the side of the street while, they get their breath back and come back to life and bringing them to a saving knowledge of Jesus. That is the gift of the evangelist. And it's really cool to see people with that gifting.

I don't have that gifting, I'm just a teacher, but we're all to do the work of an evangelist, we're told. But when somebody has a genuine gift of the evangelist, it's a very cool thing to see because they'll do anything. They'll run into a burning; they don't care. Burning building, I don't care, I'm bulletproof. They run in there, grab how many people as they can and drag them out, and the rest of us are just kind of going, wow. Well, that's what Jude tells us to do. Some of you have the gift of evangelism and you need to be doing it, doing what the Lord gifted you to do.

And to others he says, show mercy with fear. And this is talking about people who are living in sin; show mercy to these people. Show mercy, and that means you don't look at somebody who's caught in sin and say, you dirty, rotten jerk, or you scumbag. No, we show mercy too. I don't care what somebody's caught up in.

I don't care what it is or how heinous it sounds; we're going to show mercy, although he says, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. And that means you hate the sin. You hate the sin, but you show mercy to the person.

And then we're going to come to these last two verses of Jude, which are quite lovely, and they're known as the Jude Doxology, quite beautiful.

“²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

And just in case the people that Jude was writing to were kind of overcome by all this talk about the certainty of God's judgment, they're going to come upon the ungodly.

Jude ends with these wonderfully comforting words in the conclusion of this letter, and he says that the goal is to present you blameless before the presence of the glory of God with great joy. Do you know that God wants to present you blameless with great joy?

And we hear that and we're kind of like, I mean, because we know ourselves, we know all of our foibles and all of our problems, all of our sins; we're very aware. And when the Bible talks to us about being presented before the presence of God with great joy and be blameless, we kind of go, eh, not so sure about that one. He might be talking about somebody else. I don't think he's talking about me.

We forget something. When you are presented before God, you will be robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You have been cleansed by his blood and robed in His righteousness, and that brothers and sisters in Jesus, means that you will be blameless in the sight of God, and you will be presented before him with great joy, with great joy.

He ends to the only God, to the only God our Savior. There's only one God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority. And he has all those things, not just now, but forever. Amen.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you that Jude talks here in this doxology about the one who's able to keep us from stumbling. You are the one who keeps us. You not only save us, but your goodness, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, but you keep us. We don't keep ourselves saved; you keep us from stumbling through the power of your spirit in our lives. Lord, help us just to keep going the way we need to be going, building ourselves up in the faith, praying in the spirit, living our lives for Jesus to please you and not ourselves.

We ask you, Lord, to strengthen us every day, to live a new life, to live the life that you've called us to live. Not the selfish, self-centered all about me life, but the life that is lived for the glory of God.

Be with us we pray, strengthen us, we ask in Jesus' name, and all God's people said together. Amen.

God bless you.