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The Mission
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Jude

So if you have your Bible, we're going to be in book of Jude again tonight. Last week we looked at verses 1-15 and tonight we'll be looking at verses 16-25.

And since there's just one chapter in this book, we should finish tonight Lord willing.

Now, last time we met Jude, who's real name is Judas, but to distinguish himself from Judas Iscariot, which anybody in their right mind would want to do, he is called Jude here for clarification.

And like we learned last week, he was the brother of the apostle James, which meant he was the half brother of Jesus. But instead of introducing himself as the half brother of Jesus, he instead chose to focus on his spiritual relationship to Jesus. And he tells us that he is a servant, or a slave, of Jesus Christ. He's the brother of James, but he is a servant of Jesus Christ.

Now, his purpose in writing this letter started out to be about the commonality of salvation which all Christians have in common, but for reasons we can only attribute to the Holy Spirit, he instead is writing to encourage Christians to contend earnestly for genuine faith.

And again, that word "contend" means to make every effort possible to defend the faith. And then he gave us the reason for that exhortation or encouragement

And he explains why in verse 4: He says because certain men, ungodly men, apostate men have crept into the church unnoticed.

Now, obviously they were noticed by Jude, or by the Holy Spirit through Jude, because he's warning the rest of the people to watch out. And when I say the rest of the people, that includes us, because ungodly men and women and also false prophets seek to enter into our church from time to time.

And that's primarily what this book is all about. We need to constantly be on guard for people who are not here for the right reason, because all they want to do is cause trouble and cause division in the church and cause good hearted un-expecting gullible Christians to join in with them. And that's what will happen if we're not on guard.

Now, one of the gifts that some Christians possess, and we talked about this in our study on spiritual gifts, is a supernatural gift given to them when they were saved, which the Bible calls "the gift of discernment". And certain people are chosen by God to receive this gift, and to use it in the church, and for the good of the church, to recognize these trouble makers. And thank God we have some folks that belong to this membership with that gift. And they're here to protect the rest of the people who don't have that gift.

And if God has given you that gift then you need to use it for the purpose that God gave it to you, which is to help protect this congregation from ungodly people.

Now, something else. These ungodly people who seek to destroy the unity of the church, they may not even realize themselves that they're being used by Satan. They may be as unaware as anybody as to what they're doing. And so they may come across as people who are very sincere and

wanting to get involved, and to help and to serve, not even knowing themselves what they're being used for. And so we need to be very vigilant and be careful what we allow people to do in the church.

And that's all I'm going to say about that tonight.

And so Jude's not concerned about people on the outside. He's talking here, about people on the inside who are trying to destroy the church and to change things in the church to fit their lifestyle, and trying to twist the Word of God around to fit their way of life.

And so these are the apostates or the false teachers and people who are only pretending to follow Christ. And they may actually follow Christ for a time, but eventually their true colors will come out and they will abandon their faith and return to their old sinful lifestyles.

And then Jude told us about three kinds of temptation which have in the past and still today, lead people to abandon their faith. And the first one was the temptation that comes from special privileges. And Jude used the Israelites as an example. Because they were God's chosen people and because they were delivered out of Egypt, they thought that they were somehow a shoe-in to go to heaven. But like we were told in verse 5, they were later "destroyed" because they "didn't really believe."

And the point that Jude was making is that there's only one way to heaven and that's through Jesus Christ. You can have Godly parents and you can be brought up in church, and you can know all about God and still not be saved. Because genuine salvation doesn't come from head knowledge or from some special privilege, because of your last name or nationality or church denomination.

And then Jude tells us that temptation can also come from special authority. And he used the angels who were expelled from heaven as an

example. They were as close to God as one could be, but that wasn't good enough for them. They didn't just want to be like God, they wanted to take His place. And so they rebelled against God and went their own way and the result for them would be hell instead of heaven. And today they're demons instead of angels. And though many are locked up in hell today, many others roam this earth doing the will of their father Satan.

And this is a warning to people in authority, that a person's position or high calling can lead to pride if we're not careful. And Jude is warning people in authority in the church not become so proud that they think they know better than God, or know better than the Bible, which can lead them to not do the will of God, but rather go their own way.

And then Jude's third warning is about temptation that comes from sexual desires. And he mentions specifically the sexual immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah and many of the other cities around them. They were practicing homosexuality and somehow justifying it as right in their own minds, but God didn't put up with it. He destroyed them with fire.

And He's not going to put up with it today. Though many think that they can somehow justify it, and that they can somehow twist the scriptures to say what they want them to say, and that they practice a religion that condones it, they're wrong in their thinking. And their wrong thinking is going to result in a similar punishment one day when they're sentenced to suffer and be tormented with fire for eternity.

And then we were given a history lesson by Jude whereby he set out to describe what an apostate look like. And this description by the way, applies to any generation. He says, they are dreamers, who defile the flesh, and they reject the authority of the word of God, and they speak evil of those who do follow Christ.

He says they go the way of Cain, and they are also greedy like Balaam who if you'll remember, was all about the money. In other words, everything they do is for profit, their own profit.

And then he talked about how these apostates are like hidden reefs. They're hidden dangers just like reefs which hide just under the water, but are able to destroy an entire ship. And they destroy churches in the same manner.

And then he says they're useless, they're like clouds without water, which are blown about in every direction by the wind. They serve no real purpose other than to destroy the unity of the church. They're like late autumn trees without fruit. They're useless. They don't produce any fruit and so they need to be cut down.

And then he says they're like the wild waves of the sea. They just stir up trouble and dirty up the environment.

They're like wandering stars that can offer no direction to the people.

And so this imagery that Jude gives us here of these false teachers, is describing somebody who is very dangerous. They come into the fellowship of the church, and they make all these promises of how they're going to contribute to the ministry, but then they don't deliver anything but trouble, and chaos, and confusion.

And the reason is because they're spiritually dead. They're barren. They don't have anything to offer. And all their activity, and all their effort, are just empty words that cause chaos and confusion in the church.

And then he closes out this section by talking about the judgement that awaits these false teachers and these trouble makers. And how the Lord will one day execute judgment upon all who are ungodly. And as we know already, that will take place when Christ Himself returns to this earth and

judges the world of which they are a part. And when He does, He's not going to pick on just one sinner or any one sin; He's going to judge everyone who has ever lived, and rejected Jesus, and the offer of salvation and eternal life in heaven.

And like I told you last week, God's not giving us this description of these apostates or these false teachers so we can pat ourselves on the back, and brag about how much better we are than they are. He's giving us this information to remind us and to motivate us to always be ready and willing to defend the faith. And to always be on guard against false teachers and troublemakers who will try and make their way into the church.

So this is not just a warning for the early church, this is a warning for all generations, including ours.

Now, sad truth is, we're not generally very good at heeding warnings. People everyday, in fact, ignore warnings that can cost them their lives. Texting while driving, drinking and driving, not wearing a seat belt, speeding, not eating right, not exercising, smoking or using tobacco or alcohol or drugs or whatever. Hundreds of warnings that we have reliable statistics that warn us as to how dangerous these things can be if we don't heed the warning! But still we don't heed the warnings.

Well, the book of Jude is another one of those warnings we need to heed. In fact, it ought to be a glaring red-light or a stop sign for the church today, because it's a dangerous thing to ignore the warnings in this little letter—both for your own life, and for the life of the local church.

This is a clear warning from God that there are and will always be people within the organized church who are teaching error. And they're very good at trying to convince people that the truth is not the truth. And they're trying to draw people away from the real truth of the Word of God

and replace it with their own version, which will accommodate their sinful and immoral lifestyles.

And this is becoming more and more prevalent every day in the modern day church. We have churches that condone same sex marriage, and homosexuality and women in the pulpit and the use of alcohol and I could go on and on and on if I had time. And so this is a problem that happened not only in the early church, but even today it's all around us and it's getting worse by the day.

And so that's Jude's description of an apostate and his warning for the church.

Now, in this final portion of Jude's letter, he's going to tell us how we as Christians should respond with respect to these false teachers.

And the first thing Jude tells us to do, is to remember what the Bible says about it. And more specifically to remember the predictions that the apostles have already given to us.

Look at verses 17 & 18. He says,

17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.

In other words, don't be discouraged by these false teachers or these look alike Christians, and more importantly don't be surprised by them. The Lord's apostles predicted what they would do. Paul and Peter both warned of it.

In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul is writing to young Timothy and he says, Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and

doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

And then Paul again in **2 Timothy 3:1** writes this, **But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.** And then he too warns us; **And from such people turn away!**

And then **Peter in 2 Peter 3:3**, knowing this first: **that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”**

And so these apostates or false teachers or fake Christians, when they show up in our church, they're actually affirming the accuracy of Scripture.

So, here's in essence what the Bible is teaching us. God knew these attacks and this apostasy would plague the church. And so God is warning us of them so we can be prepared for them.

And also we need to remember that this is just another reminder that God is in control. He's not surprised by any of this. And yes He allows it for

the time being, but He won't put up with it forever. One day judgement **will** come. And He'll make right all these wrongs.

And so our first response is to remember what the Bible says about it. And then our second response should be to live our lives like we believe what the Bible says about it.

You know some people become so focused on the darkness around them—and on people who profess to be Christians, but who are obviously just pretenders, and they stay so upset at these folks, that they ignore their own spiritual development. And so in verses 20-21, Jude turns the focus back on us:

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Now, there's only one command in these two verses. In the first part of verse 21 he says: **“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”**

And then the other three phrases in these two verses describe how to do that: He says, “by building yourselves up,” “by praying,” and “by waiting.”

So first of all, think about this command. He says, **“Keep yourselves in the love of God.”**

Now, back in verse 1 and, we're going to see this again in verse 24, Jude says we are kept by God. The apostle Paul says the same thing at the end of the eighth chapter of Romans, when he says that “nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus”.

So, if nothing can separate us from God's love, and we are kept by God, then why do we need to keep ourselves in the love of God?

Well, what Jude is highlighting here is our responsibility in the matter. God can't keep us against our will or when we're bound and determined to be unfaithful or disobedient. We still have the responsibility and have to make the right choices in order to keep ourselves in the sphere of God's love—or in the place where we can fully enjoy the benefits of God's love.

He's not going to make you go to church. God's not going to set your alarm so you can get up and read His Word every morning. And God's not going to drive you to that Bible study during the week.

Remember the prodigal son that Jesus spoke about in Luke chapter 15? His father never stopped loving that boy, but he didn't lock him up in his room to keep him home. He allowed his son the choice to stay home or leave. And it was the son who made the choice to remove himself from the sphere of his father's love and it was his bad choices that ended him up in the pigpen.

And so this command just goes along with so many others in the New Testament that says it has to be our choice to make it a priority to stay in close fellowship with the Lord. God's not going to make us do that. But he does give us some ways through Jude's letter to help us do that.

He says, first of all, in verse 20 that you need to **“build yourselves up in your most holy faith”**.

Think of it with respect to building a house. In other words, picture building yourself up like you would build a house.

What's the first thing you need?

You need a solid foundation, right?

That's “your holy faith.” “Faith” here refers to the body of truth and how is that faith delivered to us?

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by what?

The word of God! Faith comes from hearing and studying and meditating on the word of God.

The second way we keep ourselves in His love is “by praying in the Holy Spirit.”

And this its just talking about talking to God on a regular basis, not just when you need something or when something’s wrong. But everyday all day long. Continuously talking to the Father.

There’s nothing mystical or magical here. This prayer motivated by the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit indwells you. It’s not reciting some canned prayer or repeating something somebody else prayed; it’s just simply talking to God, openly and honestly in your own words. It’s a personal relationship with God just like with a father and his son or daughter.

And then Jude gives us a third way to keep ourselves in the sphere of God’s love or in close fellowship with the Lord. And he says we do it by waiting on the Lord.

In verse 21 he says, **“looking or waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”**

Now, as believers we’ve already received God’s mercy or we wouldn’t be believers. And so what Jude is speaking of here is waiting for the culmination of God’s mercy at Jesus second coming.

And so to contend for the faith or to defend the gospel, our first response is to remember what the Bible says about it. And then our second response should be to live our lives like we believe what the Bible says about it and do what we know we have to do in order to stay in a right relationship with the Lord, which is to stay in the word, and pray and wait patiently for the Lord Jesus to return.

And then finally, Jude gives us a final way that we're to contend for the faith or defend the gospel. And that's by maintaining a biblical concern for others, which includes these false teachers and Christian pretenders.

False teaching and apostasy are dangers that we constantly face, but we can't just abandon those who've been poisoned by it. They need Jesus just like we do. And so we still have a responsibility to try and reach them and help them.

In verses 22-23 Jude describes three different groups of people who are in danger and also how we should reach out to them.

**22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;
23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.**

First, he says, "Have mercy on those who doubt." Doubts which have been created in their minds by these false teachers. Jude says, let us be merciful and patient with them.

And then secondly, in verse 23, He says, "Save others by snatching them out of the fire."

Now, this is describing somebody who's actually acting on their doubts. In other words, they're giving serious thought to maybe follow one of these apostate deceivers. And so Jude's writing this with a great sense of urgency here. It's like their house is on fire, and we need to sound the alarm and do whatever we can do to save them.

And the thirdly, he writes, **"To others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh."**

And this is a picture of those who have totally committed themselves to this false teaching. In fact, it might even be the false teachers themselves.

He says, don't ignore them either. He says, show them mercy to them as well, but be very careful when you're dealing with these folks. When he mentions avoiding their stained garment, he means you don't want to get too close to these folks, lest they influence you as well.

Now, just in case all this talk about false teachers and people pretending to be Christians has got you a little worried, Jude closes by giving us one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture.

He says,

**24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory
with exceeding joy,**

**25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and
majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.**

That's a great promise! To know that no matter what, God's got us and He'll never let us go. No false prophet or teacher or Christian pretender has any power whatsoever over our souls. No matter what, God will never turn His back on a genuine born again Christian.

Amen!