

Contend for the Faith

His Place Westminster

9/3/23

Welcome everyone...update everyone...so good to be back...

Jude 1-3

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,

To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ:

(Talk about the interplay here of how Jude associates himself...he was the half-brother of Jesus...I mean I would play that card...but is it perhaps that Jude had a radical transformation after the resurrection...because remember, according to Scripture, Jesus' brothers didn't believe him early on...could it be that he was also saying that above any family relationship that I share with Jesus...I am above all things His servant and He is my master!)

Jude says that this letter is to those who are:

Called: Out of God's free decision, He called you and me to be His own. You and I stand in a long succession behind us and beyond us of some incredible people that God has "Called"...Moses, Abraham, David, Esther, Elijah, Mary, Peter, and Paul and so many others...and we are one of them! *(sit on that for a moment...if that doesn't radically change your view of yourself I don't know what will)*

Beloved: Notice the preposition "Beloved IN God"...of course we are all beloved by God...but this is something different. When you and I answered the call of Jesus on our life...we were brought into this unique position of experiencing the grace of God and feeling it and owning like never before...something that those who haven't answered the call even understand. We explode into a new dimension of understanding of the love of God that we never knew before...and it changes you!

Deuteronomy 33:12 (ESV)

12 Of Benjamin he said,

"The beloved of the LORD dwells in safety.

The High God surrounds him all day long,

and dwells between his shoulders."

(The Good Shepherd taking us over His shoulders "between His shoulders" and carrying us...that is the closest I can think of being "Beloved in God")

Kept: Before Jude dives into the incredible atrocities and evil, He establishes some truths for the believer that are vital to understand.

- We are Kept secure in Him
- We are Kept in Faith by Him
- We are Kept safe because of His power
- We are Kept in peace by His lovingkindness
- We are Kept free by His grace and mercy

There is not a single person here today that has the power and/or ability to Keep yourself secure, free, safe or at peace...in fact, when left to our own devices those things fall by the wayside really quick.

You are Called, You are Beloved, and You are Kept!

2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude is laying the foundation for us here because ***what he's about to lay out is going to require some real men and women of God who know who they are...*** who are people of faith who's identity is wrapped up in their Savior and not themselves or this world.

Jude is saying, ***"If you're gonna pick up what I'm laying down...you're gonna have to not just Know who you are in Christ...but you're gonna need an extra measure of Mercy, Peace and Love to get through what you're about to experience."***

-If you don't understand **Mercy** for yourself, you will not be merciful to others who are in need of mercy.

-You have to ***know God's Peace*** because you will need **Peace** in the face of opposition, Peace in the face of disruption

-This world is evil and the people in it are too...and they ain't easy to Love at times...and it for sure is hard to love those that do evil on purpose for pleasure.

We need Mercy, Peach and Love to be multiplied to us!

3 Beloved, 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.**

It seems as though Jude was desiring to write perhaps just a fun little letter, rejoicing with his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, on how awesome and how great it was that they had been saved...but something caused him to change course.

And this phrase that is used in verse 3 that says ***"appealing to you"...***is a term that was **used in those days of a general who was giving orders to his his army...**so the atmosphere of this letter is not a tiptoe through the tulips...it is one of seriousness and firmness...a military like feel to it.

I don't know if it was something Jude saw on the Jewish News Network (JNN) or on the Fox Have Holes New Network...but more than likely something began to stir in his spirit from the Holy Spirit...

Either way, the letter to his spiritual family became not a “miss you” letter but a discourse to ***take up spiritual positions and fight***...or as Jude says:

Contend for the Faith!

Illustration: ***See Something, Say Something*** campaign after 9/11...motto for a lot of things when it comes to public awareness of danger.

At its core, ***it's a clarion call for the normal citizen to be looking out for anything that seems out of place or unusual***

We do this all the time...both in business and even at home, and for that matter when it comes to the physical protection and security of the church: ***We are seeking to ensure that no one who might cause harm will be able to creep in unnoticed.***

And that is the very same idea and even terminology that is used here in verse 4...

Jude 4

4 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 and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.***

This was a matter of urgency for Jude...And I want to come at this today from 2 fronts:

- 1. The satanic onslaught that we see within our culture and how some of those practices and ideologies have even made their way within the church**
- 2. The confusion and chaos that has emerged within the Church from the collapse of conviction within the hearts and minds of those who once believed what the Bible said.**

Folks, I don't know if you've been sleeping under a rock over the last few years, but this world has gone straight mad.

The world culture has always been evil...remember it is Satan who is the “Prince of the power of the air”...but it doesn't take a rocket scientist or a theologian to recognize that ***over the last few years this world has not only been going to hell in a hand basket, but it got the Fast Pass too!***

Outside the Church and even within the Church, biblical standards of morality, truth, justice, love, marriage, sexual identity have been discarded for either no standard at all or a hyper-

grace standard that has profaned the sanctuaries of some of the greatest churches.

So to his generation and to our generation today, Jude says...***it is of utmost importance that the Bride of Christ recognize the threat, heed the warnings of Scripture...and Contend for the Faith!***

ungodly people, ***who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.***

He lays out the enemy here...people who have infiltrated the ranks so to speak:

They are Ungodly

We have within the ranks of churches today, and of course in our culture, those that claim to belong to God, but are in fact ungodly in their thinking and in their living.

As Timothy said...

2 Timothy 3:5 (ESV)

5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

They are Deceitful

The first part of verse 4 says...***For certain people have crept in***

Satan has a strategic plan and that plan involves secretly and subversedly sneaking in his agenda from the whitehouse to the churchhouse...even into your house.

This culture has infiltrated the Church because the soldiers have gone to sleep at thier post. ***The Church at some point over the last few decades have stopped Contending for the Faith.***

This enemy has more though...

They are Enemies of God's Grace

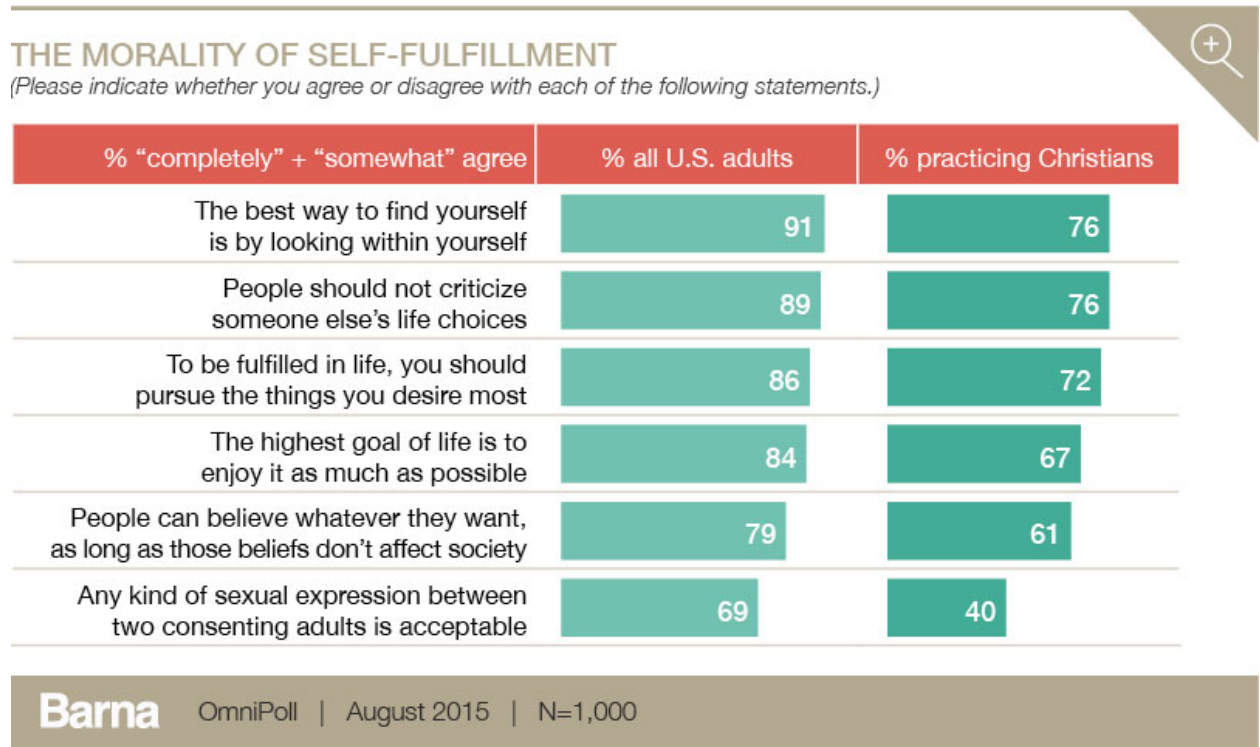
Satan and his agenda has strategically made his way into our culture and into churches in an attempt to change the doctrine that has been followed since the establishment of the New Testament Church...

And to "Turn" the grace of our God into vulgarity and lewdness.

Think I'm spitting nonsense, listen to some of these stats:

Barna: "Christian morality is being ushered out of American social structures and off the

cultural main stage, leaving a vacuum in its place—and the broader culture is attempting to fill the void. New research from Barna reveals growing concern about the moral condition of the nation, even as many American adults admit they are uncertain about how to determine right from wrong.” **(Show chart)**



This isn’t just a cultural issue...this is a Church issue as well.

Jude, in the event that the Christ followers of his day had forgot, he gives them a little history lesson and some examples...

Jude 5-7

5 Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, **afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**

Jude is saying, “Hey just because you are God’s creation and made in His image doesn’t preclude you from judgment when you decide to live an ungodly life, are deceitful and become an enemy of God’s grace...even some of the children of Israel that God had rescued from Pharoah’s hand were later destroyed because of their ungodliness.”

6 And 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—**

Hey, you wanna try and play God or replace Him with yourself or someone else...you

wanna allow someone else to be God in your life...then ok, here is what happen to the angels that tried that.

7 just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

You wanna redefine truth and even go so far as to try and redefine my created order of things and pursue sexual immorality and redefine sexual identity and what you can do with the bodies I gave you...Ok, well, this is what happend last time a people tried to do that.

In verses 8-16 Jude just calls out the apostates within the culture that have snuck into the circles of the Bride of Christ...

8 Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. 9 But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." 10 But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. 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. 12 These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. 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." 16 These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

Our boy Jude is just going after it at this point...he coming in hot!

He's telling us, God's soldiers, those of us that should be Contending for the Faith: Hey you Contenders, here is what the Pretenders look like:

1. They Reject Divine Authority

All authority comes from God...whether it is authority in the home, within the Church and even within government.

Those who exercise authority are also "under" authority because they are accountable to God.

But the hallmark of a Pretender, what Jude and others in the NT called Apostates, is that they reject the authority of God.

And I love how Jude describes them in verse 8... **“They are dreamers”**

These ungodly individuals live in a dream world of unreality and delusion. They have believed Satan’s lie that he has used from the very beginning:

Genesis 3:4-5 (ESV)

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

These delusional individuals who infiltrate the doors of our churches, the hallways or kids schools and the seats in our courtrooms have turned away from God’s Absolute Truth and instead have fed their minds on false doctrine that inflate their egos and encourage their rebellion.

Jude goes on to say that as a result of their rebellion and pride, **they “defile the flesh”** living to satisfy their animal lusts.

When a person despises God’s authority, he/she feels free to disobey God’s truths and live as they see fit...not realizing that those rules that God has set forth have penalties attached to them.

2. They Resort to Hypocrisy

Hypocrites are those that say one thing and do another...or present one thing yet produce something completely different.

Jude presents six different word pictures to describe these Pretenders and Apostates:

1) Hidden Reefs or Hidden Rocks- People who look like smooth sailing on the outside but will wreck your ship if you’re not careful and watching for the “hidden” things in that Pretenders life.

2) Selfish Shepherds- Yes this for spiritual leaders within the church but I believe this also for political and civic leaders as well that exploit the people instead caring for the people. Woe to those who God has set up to shepherd His people, and to care for His people, and to judge rightly for His people..who instead exploit them for their own selfish ambitions.

3) Waterless Clouds- People who promise much but deliver nothing. People who

boast of their spiritual and leadership ability for God's people and produce nothing.

4) **Fruitless Trees-** Jude calls them fruitless trees in late Autumn. Just when the farmer is expecting fruit...but they come up barren. These people are fruitless and rootless.

Matthew 7:16a (ESV)

16 You will recognize them by their fruits.

5) **Wild Waves-** Like the swelling of the sea, they make a lot of noise but they produce nothing that lasts. These Pretenders and Apostates remind me of this passage from Isaiah...

Isaiah 57:20 (ESV)

**20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea;
for it cannot be quiet,
and its waters toss up mire and dirt.**

6) **Wandering Stars-** Jude was referring to meteors or falling stars that suddenly appear and then vanish into the darkness. Pretenders of the Faith are those that are here today and gone tomorrow...because as soon as their shine is gone in a place, they must go somewhere else that will massage their pride and desires.

But ultimately, this is what happens to the Pretenders and Apostates...

3. They Receive their Due Punishment

Therefore, stay away, get away and have nothing to do with their belief system and way of life...because ***its end is destruction...and it is on it's way.***

When Jude gets to this point in his letter to the Church, he uses a passage out of an apocryphal book called the Book of Enoch, that is not included in the canon of Scripture but nonetheless does the job here in explaining what Jude was trying to say...

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."

In other words, one day very soon, all those who have Rejected Divine Authority, will face the judgment of God and it will be swift and it will be complete.

We do't talk about the judgment side of God much because talking about the Grace side of

things and the Love side of things feels much better and sells more books.

But we serve a holy God who would not be holy if He allowed wickedness to go unchecked and unanswered.

Especially when it comes to the house of God.

(Give context)

1 Peter 4:17 (ESV)

17 For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Remember, Jude's purpose in his letter was twofold: ***he wanted to expose the false teachers that had infiltrated the Christian community, and he wanted to encourage Christians to stand firm in the faith and fight for the truth.***

So how do I do that? How do I stay unstained from the ways of this world, but perhaps even more importantly... **How do I Contend for the Faith within my church, in the world and for my Family?**

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." **19** It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. **20** But you, 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. **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.

1. Be intentional about your spiritual growth

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith

Every Christian needs to assume responsibility for their own spiritual growth. It is your pastors job to shepherd the flock...to guide and protect...to instruct. But it is not their job to feed you daily. (illustration of kid and eating)

2. Pray in Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been given to you to come alongside you and not only be your Comforter, but your power and your guide...but you have to have a relationship with Him.

Develop that Grace of Tongues in your prayer life and allow the Holy Spirit to do in

you what He desires to do.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 (ESV)

9 But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man imagined,

what God has prepared for those who love him”—

10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

3. Keep your Life in Alignment with God’s Word

21 keep yourselves in the love of God

This does not mean we have to do certain things to merit God’s love.

Jude is telling us to keep ourselves in a place where God can actively bless us, and to keep ourselves away from all that is unlike Him, and those things that would drag us down spiritually.

In other words, we don’t keep ourselves saved, but we keep ourselves safe.

4. Love on People and Represent Jesus Well

22 And have mercy on those who doubt

I know the world is a mess and I know people in this world are even messier...but people are won over by love and not by anger and fingerpointing.

Yes we need to stand up for the things of God in our churches and in our culture, and not give an inch to the devil...but we can do that with love and respect and yet firm.

Love people...represent Jesus well...don’t make people hate Christians because you’re a knucklehead.

5. Reach the Lost No Matter the Cost

23 save others by snatching them out of the fire

Jesus is coming soon and heaven and hell are real places...and not every person is going to heaven.

The Bible is clear:

Romans 2:6-8 (ESV)

He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

Folks, there is a world out there that is dying and going to hell...and we have the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is the power to save people from the pits of hell...

And that job has been given to us...let us not be found to have committed a dereliction of duty.

And we close today with perhaps one of the most powerful and beautiful benedictions in Scripture:

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.

Prayer/Altar