

***“The Danger of Apostasy and Our Duty to Defend Our Faith” by E A Terry Delivered 10-18-20***

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2: 4 – 17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:3 - 11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3: 1 – 9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2: 1 – 22; **Jude 1 - 25**

The Book of Jude is a only 25 verses.

But Jude is a very important letter to the church and Jude is a very timely letter for today.

Bible teacher John MacArthur suggest that Jude is placed just before Revelation in The New Testament because the Book of Jude accurately describes the condition of the Church in the days immediately preceding our Lord’s return.

In our lesson from 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy we read; In the last days ***“people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - having a form of godliness but denying its power.”***

In verse 1 Jude identifies himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

This James was a leader in the church in Jerusalem.

This James is **not** The Apostle James.

Jude and James were both Jesus’ half-brothers; they were both Mary and Joseph’s sons.

There is no indication in The Gospels that Jesus’ brothers and sisters believed Jesus was The Messiah until after Jesus’ resurrection.

These two brothers of Jesus’ authored a book in the New Testament.

It is interesting to me that the major theme of the book of James is *“genuine religion”* and the major theme of the book of Jude is *“our duty to defend our faith”*.

Jude addresses his letter to Christians.

In verse 1 Jude reminds us as Christians that we ***“have been called”, “we are loved by God The father”, and “we are kept by Jesus Christ.”***

In verse 2 we are reminded that ***“abundant mercy, peace, and love”*** are available for us to claim.

Verse 3 gives us the purpose of Jude’s letter.

Jude warns us of apostasy in the church and Jude reminds us that is our Christian duty ***“to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people.”***

Apostasy means the abandoning, deserting, or renouncing one’s faith.

The word ***“contend”*** means *to fight for, to stand up for, to defend.*

As you know a person will stand up and defend a cause they believe in and a person will stand up and defend a person they love.

So, this morning we all need to ask ourselves;

*Do I love Jesus enough to stand up and defend Jesus when my co-workers or neighbors take The Lord's name in vain or when they say that Jesus was not God in the flesh?*

*Is my faith strong enough to defend Christian morals and reject the so called "new morality"?*

*Do I remain quiet when someone says there are many ways for a person to gain eternal life?*

*How important is my faith to me?*

Verse 3 also tells us why we are to defend our faith.

The good news of Jesus ***"has been entrusted to us."***

Jesus calls us to be different; to demonstrate the power of God; to show the world the benefits of following Jesus.

Jesus loves us so we can love other people.

Jesus forgives us so we can forgive those people who wrong us.

Jesus bless us so we can be a blessing to others.

There are several places in The New Testament where we are warned that false teachers will slip into the church.

In Matthew 24:11, Jesus warned us; ***"and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people."***

The Apostle Paul warned us that false teachers would come.

***"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. "Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them."*** (Acts 20:29–30)

In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1 ***"The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons."***

We also read The Apostle Peter warning about false teachers in our lesson from 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter.

But in verse 4 Jude plainly warns us that false teachers **are** present in the church!

Verse 4 also tell us that false teachers are ***"ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."***

While some pastors are false teachers; church officers, youth leaders and church members can **also** be false teachers.

False teachers cause divisions and disruption in the church.

We read about a woman Jesus called Jezebel in the Jesus' letter to the church at Thyatira.

Jezebel practiced immorality and idolatry and she encouraged and led other members in the church to embrace her evil way of life.

Sadly, today many people enter the ministry for the money and / or the prestige.

Sadly, we have TV evangelist and pastors who preach the prosperity gospel and / or promise to heal you if you send money to them.

When that promise of healing does not materialize, they say you did not have enough faith.

Sadly, some churches claim the Bible is outdated and endorse homosexuality.

Sadly, many Christians steal things from their employer and / or goof-off on the job.

Sadly, many Christians embrace the world's view that lying, cheating, sex outside of marriage, and divorce are normal.

Verse 4 states; ***“they are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”***

False teachers produce no spiritual fruit, they do not invest any time in studying The Bible, and God's word does not change the way they live.

In verse 3 Jude tells **why** we are to defend the Christian faith.

***“I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.”***

We as a church and each one of us as a Christian has been entrusted with the stewardship of the Christian faith.

1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:4 states; ***“we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel.”***

Jesus gave us The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

***“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”***

In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15 we read; ***“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”***

Bible teacher Warren Wiersbe said this; *“The Church is always one generation short of extinction. If our generation fails to guard the truth and entrust it to our children, then that will be the end!*

As Christians we are charged with the responsibility defend our Christian faith.

We are to given the responsibility to share the Good News of the gospel with our children and the unbelievers God has put in our life.

We are to defend the Christian values of love, forgiveness, peace, honesty, purity, humility, and justice.

Jude make it clear that it is our Christian responsibility and it is our Christian duty to defend the truth of God’s Word.

It is our responsibility to defend The Good News of Jesus.

If you do not stand up for Jesus and the Christian faith, you need to ask yourself; ***“am I really a believer”?***

Remember Jesus said; ***“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven”*** (Matthew 10:32 – 33)

In verses 5 – 7 Jude gives us 3 examples of groups that God punished for abandoning their faith.

God miraculously freed The Children Israel from slavery in Egypt.

But when they were tested in the wilderness they complained, they did not trust God to provide for their needs, they blamed God for their hardship, they did not believe God’s promises, and they wanted to go back to their former way of life as slaves in Egypt.

They wander for 40 years in the wilderness and they died in the wilderness.

God prevented them from entering the promised land.

The second example is the angels who rebelled against God.

These angels abandoned their positions of authority and followed Satan.

God banished them from heaven and bound them with everlasting chains until they will be thrown into The Lake of Fire on The Day of Judgement.

The third example is Sodom and Gomorrah.

***“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire”.*** (Verse 7)

Then in verses 11 Jude gives us 3 examples of individuals God punished because they abandoned their faith by doing what they wanted to do.

The first individual given as an example is Cain.

Cain did not bring an acceptable sacrifice to God and Cain murdered his brother Abel out of jealousy. (Genesis 4:1 -16).

The second individual given as an example of abandoning their faith is Balaam.

Balaam's love of money caused him to abandoned his faith and his calling as a prophet. (Numbers 22-24)

The third individual given as an example is the Korah.

Korah lead a rebellion against Moses. (Numbers 16)

The Lord opened up the earth and swallowed Korah along with all who followed Korah, their households, and their possessions. (Numbers 16:32)

These three individuals illustrate the attitudes of a false teachers; promotion of self, power, greed, and disregard of God's authority.

Jude also describes false teachers as *"shepherds who feed themselves"*, *"clouds without rain"*, *"trees without fruit"*. (verse 12), *"ungodly"* (verse 15), *"grumblers and faultfinders"*. *"They boast about themselves, and flatter others for their own advantage"*. (verse 16)

Jude also said they are *"twice dead"*, (verse 12) meaning they are totally useless.

Jude concludes his description of false teachers in verse 18 & 19 by saying; *"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have The Spirit"*

We must never forget that Satan is real, Satan is our enemy, and Satan is the one behind false teachers.

In Ephesians 6:12 The Apostle Paul reminds us that *"our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"*.

Satan wants to destroy you and your Christian witness.

Satan got to Eve by creating doubt about God's goodness and the need to obey God's commands.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8 we are told to; *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

In verse 20 – 23 Christians are given 6 directives. *"But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; save*

*others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh”*

We are to **“build ourselves up”** – We spiritually build ourselves up by increasing our knowledge of The Lord, walking with The Lord every day, and not listening to false teachers. (John 15:9)

We are to **“pray in The Holy Spirit.”** – Ephesians 6: 18 tells us; **“to pray in the Spirit on all occasions.”**

The Holy Spirit is our source of power and our helper.

In Romans 8; 26 -27 we are told: **“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. <sup>27</sup> And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God”.**

We are to **“keep yourself in God’s love”** – We are to make strengthening our personal relationship with Jesus a priority each day

James 4:8 tells us **“Come near to God and He will come near to you.”**

We are to **“wait for God’s mercy”** - We are to look forward to Jesus’ return and for Jesus to take us home to heaven.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:9 says; **“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing”.** **“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord”.** (Romans 12:19)

We are to **“Be merciful to those who doubt”.**

We are to help and to encourage those who are just beginning their walk with The Lord.

We are to be a good Christian role model to all the people around us.

We are to **“Snatch other from the fire”** – We do that by sharing the good news with the unbelievers God has put in our life.

We are to tell them about God’s love for them and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

We are to hate the sin but to love the sinner.

Please not these are six directives given to all Christians – they are not six suggestions.

So, the question is; *will we be faithful disciples and fully embrace these six directives in our daily life?*

In verses 24 & 25 Jude reminds us that Jesus is the one who keeps us from falling into Satan’s traps.

Jesus is the one who stands up for us and defends us before God when Satan accuses us.

God's word challenges each of us to ask ourselves:

- *Do I love Jesus enough to stand up for Jesus?*
- *How important is my Christian faith in to me?*
- *Does my daily life accurately reflect Jesus' way of life?*
- *Am I a true believer or am I a false teacher?*

**AMEN**