

CONTEND

A STUDY IN JUDE

Sermon Series Notes

“Staying Free From Ungodly Influences” (Jude 20-25)

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Intro: One of the most fascinating things to me about the epistle of Jude is the man God used to write it. He is one of Jesus’ four brothers, children who were born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of Christ (Mark 6:3). His brothers initially did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, and they mocked him (John 7:2-5). Later they not only believed, but became travelling ministers proclaiming that Jesus was indeed the Christ (I Cor.9:5). What was it that so dramatically changed them? See I Cor.15:1-4; Rom.1:16.

Jude intended to write about the salvation we share, but the Holy Spirit changed his mind and he ended up writing to “urge you to contend for the faith once for all entrusted to the saints.” People had slipped in to the church and brought teaching that was not in line with the gospel message, and who were not living in a manner worthy of the gospel. They were not submitted to Christ, lived immoral lives, were irreverent, ignored God’s clearly revealed truth, were full of themselves, and were grumblers and faultfinders. They attended the communion feasts, but could sit through the whole service without any conviction of sin. They are religious people who have no real relationship with Jesus Christ. These are the people Jude warns us about.

Note verse 19. This is what Satan longs to do. Jesus said to Peter, “Satan has desired to sift you as wheat.” Expound on what this means practically.

So the message of Jude is to stay away from ungodly influences that will pull us down rather than build us up in Christ.

Read the text

vv.22-23 Be wise in reaching out to others with truth.

Once again, the main message of Jude is a warning to know who to stay away from. See Rom.16:17-18. You see, some people are pawns in the hand of the enemy who are trying to reach us. The enemy wants to use them to pull us down. These are people we are not to associate with.

When we do reach out to people with truth, we need to be wise. The manner in which we reach out should depend on the spiritual condition of those we are trying to reach. Let me give you a few examples:

- Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4)
- Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3)
- While Jesus dealt in a merciful manner with Nicodemus, as a whole he blasted the Pharisees

(See Matthew 23:13-15); Stephen's message was just as cutting (Acts 7); See also Acts 13:6-12.

- Snatching some from the fire suggests a special urgency; Could this include people we know are close to death, and it is obvious that they are not saved? Could it be that their spiritual condition is so bad that we know they could be in danger of death (severe addict, rebel, etc.).
- The third reference is very interesting, "show mercy, mixed with fear." Most commentators believe this refers to being very careful in reaching out to some, because you yourself may be tempted to join them in their sin.
 - Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.
 - I don't think all of those 20 + thousand Israelite men who accepted the invitation to go with the Moabite women to their worship service expected to commit sexual immorality that day (Num25). It could be that some went with the intention of checking out their worship, then telling them about worshipping the true God. This is one of the reasons I'm not at all for "missionary dating." I've seen many over the years who have entered into a relationship with someone they intended to lead to the Lord, but instead were led away from the Lord themselves.

v.20a Build yourselves up in the faith; Note Jude v.1 "kept by Jesus Christ." See II Tim.1:12; Jude 24. There are aspects of our salvation that God is solely responsible for. But there are other aspects that we are responsible for. How do we build ourselves up in the faith?

Spiritual Exercise

I try to eat healthy. I try to live a disciplined life. I work out. If I stopped eating healthy, being disciplined, and working out, it would affect me, right? It's the same spiritually.

I Timothy 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

One essential for being built up in the faith that Jude does not mention, yet is vital, is a regular (daily) diet of the Word of God.

- Matthew 4:4...Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Deut.8:3)
- Rom.10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.
- John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth
- Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.
- Psalm 119: 11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
- Acts 20:32 Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking,

correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- I Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.
- Give practical advice on getting a regular diet of the Word of God

v.20b Pray in the Holy Spirit

- The prompting of the Holy Spirit; Anybody ever had the Lord bring something or someone to your mind out of nowhere? It's probably the Holy Spirit prompting you to pray.
- Depending on the Holy Spirit when I don't know what to pray; Rom.8:26-27; There have been times in my life that I have just cried and groaned in prayer, and this verse tells me that the Holy Spirit is interceding through those groans.
- Being disciplined in prayer (I Peter 4:7; Gal.5:22-23; Eph.6:18, note "be alert").
- Pray all kinds of prayers (Eph.6:18; I Tim.2:1)
- Pray continually (I Thess.5:17; Neh.2:1-5a)
- The gift of tongues (I Cor.14:4, 14)

v.21a Keep yourself in God's love

- Obedience (John 15:9-10; I Peter 1:14); How differently Balaam's life would have turned out had he just obeyed the Lord ("Do not go with them"). We are the only ones to blame if we are unwilling to obey. With that said, some people still try to blame others for their disobedience (see I Sam.15; Prov.21:3).
 - Proverbs 19:3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.
 - Genesis 4:6 The the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."
- Church meetings (I Cor.14:12, 26; Eph.4:16; Heb.10:24-25)
- Christian Relationships; Becoming such an integral part of the church body that I both receive love myself, and love others as well. See John 15:17; I John 3:17-18; Gal.6:10.
- Note: Being relational in the church has it's challenges; See Eph.4:2; Heb.3:12-13 (context); I was 19 years old when I became a Christian, and I began attending church regularly. I got plugged in...hanging out with the youth group, etc. these new relationships were essential to me keeping myself in God's love; But being relational in the church had some surprises for me. My first was when a Sunday school teacher rebuked me for working on a message in class while a visiting speaker was teaching. I thought the guest teacher was pretty boring, so I just took advantage of the time and ignored whatever he was saying. When I was rebuke for doing so, I did not enjoy or appreciate it. Thank the Lord in time I went back and thanked this man for loving me (& the others in the class) enough to rebuke me. I was wrong, and I set a bad example for those around me.
- Rev.3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.
- Proverbs 27:5-6 Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.
- Prov.15:31 He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise.

v.21b Keep your head in the clouds (Phil.3:18-19; Col.3:1-4; James 4:14b; Rom.8:18-25; I John 3:1-3; Titus

2:13).

- Heb.10:35-39
- I am looking forward to the day I do not have to wait any longer for my redemption. What a glorious future those of us who know Christ have to look forward to! See Phil.1:23-24; Jesus said "Occupy" until I come (Luke 19:13).
- I Peter 1:13 (note v.14 context);

v.24 I Cor.10: 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

If we stay away from ungodly influences, keep up the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life, stay in fellowship with committed believers, and keep our heads in the clouds as we wait for the hope of eternal life, God will do his part in keeping us from falling, and when we stand before Jesus Christ, we will do so without fault and fullness of joy. And we will hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys of your Lord."

v.25 To the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, both now and forevermore! Amen.