

JUDE 1:1-2
PURPOSE OF JUDE!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Jude chapter 1 as we begin our in-depth study of Jude.

Now I know we spent a long time in the Gospel of John, and you are probably thinking, ***“Jude, great, that is a short book. Only one chapter or twenty-five verses, some 613 words and we should be done in a week or two!”***

Keep in mind that we are going to take our time going through this book and it will be a little longer than just a few weeks. There is so much to glean from what Jude wrote that is very applicable to the days we are living in.

Now, if I was to give you a title for this book it would be this. ***EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH!***

That is truly what this letter is all about. Coming against the false teaching that was coming into the church, the apostasy that was coming into the church!

Now we hear that would ***“apostasy”*** and do we really know what that means, what it is all about?

The definition of the word ***“apostasy”*** and ***“apostate”*** are as follows and this is from Noah Webster from 1828, from his dictionary. He wrote, ***“An abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one’s faith or religion . . . One who has forsaken the church, sect or profession to which he before adhered. . . False, traitorous.”***

That is what Jude is going to come against and it is something we must come against today!

But what has happened in the church today is that we don't want to offend anyone so if someone brings in a teaching that is not Scriptural, we ignore it. We don't want to deal with it.

Some may even say, ***“It is just a little bit off, so what's the big deal!”***

Here's the thing and I will give you two examples of why it is such a big deal to expose and not ignore or embrace false teaching.

The first one is flying from San Diego, California to Hawaii. If the pilot was only one degree off, by the time he arrived in Hawaii he would have missed the island by 42 miles! That is not good!

Or what about just 1% of poison in your drink, would you drink it?

Of course not, you would be a fool to take a chance like that!

And yet, when it comes to Bible doctrine, people don't seem to care!

Let me show you what I mean, and this is from 2023, this year! We are told,

Bible knowledge among Americans, in recent years, has plummeted. And, unless God's people immerse themselves day and night in God's Word – reading it, praying it, sharing it, obeying it – America will face a devastating spiritual famine.

The dire warning in Amos 8:11 should capture our attention: ***“The days are coming,’ declares the LORD God, ‘when I will send . . . a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.”***

Already, only 6 percent of American adults hold to a Christian worldview, evangelical pollster George Barna tells us.

. . . despite a rise in U.S. Bible sales in 2021 – American engagement in Scripture drastically declined last year. In its 2022 State Of The Bible, the American Bible Society reported the largest decline in “Bible users” among American adults that the study has ever recorded - a 10 percent drop, from 49 to 39 percent.

Defining “*Bible users*” as those who read or listen to the Bible outside of church only three or four times per year, the study sets an admittedly low bar for performance – especially considering Scripture urges us to meditate on the Law of the Lord day and night (Joshua 1; Psalm 1). . . .

According to Timothy Larsen, Professor of Christian Thought at Wheaton College, the more recent “*freefall*” in biblical knowledge has “*many contributing factors*”: the general decline in “*long-form reading*”; an emphasis in churches on entertainment, rather than instruction . . .

But the problem goes much deeper than this, he said: “*The root cause . . . has to do with the condition of our hearts. Are we drawn to the beauty and power of God’s good Word because we are drawn to God Himself?*”

Writing in 1950, Christian scholar and author C. S. Lewis warned that the future of the King James Version of Scripture depended not on its literary merits, but on its spiritual authority. “*For the Bible, whether in the Authorised or in any other version,*” he wrote, “*I foresee only two possibilities; either to return as a sacred book or to follow the classics, if not quite into oblivion, yet into the ghost-life of the museum and the specialist’s study.*”

In other words, in the long run, Scripture will be read as God’s Word, or it will be read rarely. As such, the future of Scripture’s impact on American culture depends largely on Christians who sincerely confess, to borrow words from the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, that the Bible “*has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.*”

I think he nails it by showing us the problem, ***“The root cause . . . has to do with the condition of our hearts. Are we drawn to the beauty and power of God’s good Word because we are drawn to God Himself?”***

How much do we love God?

How much do we read His Word is the evidence of how much we love God.

Now I realize that may be a hard one to believe, but think about it. If you really love someone you will want to get to know them.

When I first started dating Julie I wanted to be with her all the time. Not that I don’t want to now, I don’t want to get myself in trouble here. But I wanted to know everything about her and today, some 45 years after we first met, I still want to know her more and more because I love her.

Maybe you have been a Christian for 10 years, 20 years, 30 years or more! Do you still want to know Jesus more today than when you first got saved.

Think about that one. What did you do when you first got saved?

You were at all the Bible studies you could go to.

You were reading the Bible.

You were praying.

But for some, ***“Hey, I know what I believe. I have heard that study before, I really don’t need to hear it again. I’m good!”***

Imagine saying that to your spouse, how would they feel if you said that to them.

“Honey, I know you love me, and I love you. We are always together so we really don’t need to keep going out on dates! We are married. We are good!”

That would not go over too well! And the same is true with our Lord. He died for our sins so that we can fellowship with Him!

And since we can't be with Jesus we can be in His Word and see what He has for us!

I have called this study the – ***PURPOSE OF JUDE!***

In other words, why did Jude write this letter or epistle? What was the purpose and you will see, as I have said, that he wanted to wake Christians up to contend for the faith that has been entrusted to them.

Let me fill in some background information about Jude and this letter.

I have talked about Bible illiteracy and what is interesting here is that Jude uses some eight Old Testament illustrations to make his point and he does not give us much background on them.

Why is that?

Because I believe he expected his readers to know these stories and thus, he just made his point with each one.

It is important for us to know what we believe in and why we believe it so that we can give the evidence for our faith.

Now we don't have to guess who wrote this letter, because we are told that Jude or Judas wrote this letter.

The bigger question is, who is this man?

The Scriptures give us a few possibilities.

There was Judas who was the son of James, not Iscariot, one of the apostles according to Luke 6:16. But it is doubtful that he wrote this letter. We don't see anywhere in this letter that the writer of this letter was one of the apostles.

Then there was Judas, also named Barsabas, who accompanied Paul, Barnabas and Silas to Antioch according to Acts 15:22. Again, it is highly doubtful that this Judas wrote this letter. There is nothing that points to him writing it.

I believe that the Jude or Judas that wrote this letter is none other than the half-brother of Jesus Christ and the brother of James who wrote the epistle bearing his name. He even tells us that he is the “**brother of James.**” Jude 1:1.

I do realize that for some the idea of Jesus having brothers and sisters is hard for them to believe.

Why is it so hard for some to believe that?

Because some believe that Mary was a virgin all her life, but that is not what the Scriptures teach.

Yes, Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary, He was virgin born, but after the birth of Jesus, we see Joseph and Mary enjoy a normal marriage relationship, including sex!

In fact, we are told in Matthew 1:25 that Joseph “**. . . did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.**”

I think that is very clear.

In Matthew 13:54-56 we are told, “**Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, ‘Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?’**”

And in Mark 6:1-3 we are told of this also, **“Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?’ So they were offended at Him.”**

So Jesus did have half-brothers and sisters!

Now, when did Jude get saved?

We need to keep in mind that prior to the death and resurrection of Jesus, His brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

In John 7:5 we are told, **“For even His brothers did not believe in Him.”**

You see, they thought He was nuts, that He lost His mind!

Then what changed them, what caused them to believe that Jesus is the Messiah?

They saw the risen Christ and because of that, they believed, at least James saw the risen Lord according to I Corinthians 15:7.

How do I know they became believers?

Because in Acts 1:14, as the apostles and other disciples were gathered in the upper room, we are told, **“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”**

So I believe that Jude is the half-brother of Jesus and the brother of James, and he wrote this letter or epistle to counter the apostasy that was coming into the church.

Not only that, but Paul tells us that the brothers of the Lord were well known in the early church.

He wrote in I Corinthians 9:5, **“Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, *the brothers of the Lord*, and Cephas?”**

Now we have no way to know for sure the exact date of this letter, but most believe it was somewhere between 67 to 70 A. D. Some feel it may have been written as late as 80 A. D. but I don't think it was that late.

The reason I say that is there is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple that occurred in 70 A. D.

If it was after that period of time, as big of a destruction as this was, I believe Jude would have mentioned it.

As I was reading over the introduction to this letter in my Bible, I felt it portrays what this letter is all about very clearly.

Let me share with you what this introduction has to say and then I will expound on it. We are told,

FIGHT! Contend! Do battle! When apostasy arises, when false teachers emerge, when the truth of God is attacked, it is time to fight for the faith. Only believers who are spiritually “in shape” can answer the summons.

At the beginning of his letter Jude focuses on the believers' common salvation, but then feels compelled to challenge them to contend for the faith. The danger is real.

False teachers have crept into the church, turning God's grace into unbound license to do as they please. Jude reminds such men of God's past dealings with unbelieving Israel, disobedient angels, and wicked Sodom and Gomorrah. In the face of such danger Christians should not be caught off guard. The challenge is great, but so is the God who is able to keep them from stumbling.

- Holy Bible, The Open Bible Expanded Edition - NKJV, p. 1294

Think of it like this. Luke gave to us *The Acts of the Apostles* that laid down the beginnings of the church.

And now Jude comes along and gives to us what we might call *The Acts of the Apostates* as he shows us the falling away of the church from sound or healthy doctrine.

Now, as fitting as this letter was in Jude's day, it fits in perfectly with the days we are living in, as I have said.

You see, false teachers and their destructive doctrines, their doctrines of demons, are leading the church down this slippery slope away from God!

Why this is so dangerous is that apostates claim to be Christians, and they are not! And thus, they are leading people away from the truth, there is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates may say they speak for Christ, but they deny His deity, they reject His Lordship.

Let me share this with you. We are told,

In the institutional church, composed of professing Christians who are in many cases not Christian, look for many things to happen:

With increasing frequency the leadership of the denominations will be captured by those who completely reject the historic truths of the Bible and deny doctrines which according to Christ Himself are crucial to believe in order to be a Christian. In some of the largest Protestant denominations this has already taken place. The few remaining institutions which are not yet dominated by the disbelievers will go downhill in the same manner.

There will be unprecedented mergers of denominations into “*religious conglomerates.*” This will occur for two reasons:

First, most denominations were formed because of deep convictions about certain spiritual truths. As more of these truths are discarded as irrelevant because of unbelief in Biblical authority, there will be no reason to be divided.

Unity is certainly important to have, but never, according to the teachings of Christ, at the expense of crucial truths of Christianity.

Secondly, as ministers depart from the truths of the Bible, they lose the authority and power that it has to meet real human needs, and as many ministers are not truly born spiritually themselves and are consequently without the illumination of God’s Spirit, they no longer will be able to hold their present congregations, much less attract others.

So they resort to “*social action gimmicks,*” super-organization and elaborate programs as a substitute.

As Paul predicted concerning these ministers in the last days: “*holding to a form of godliness [literally religion], although they have denied its power. . . .*”

And again he says, “. . . *they are always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (II Timothy 3:5, 7 NASB).

- Hal Lindsay, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, p. 181

This writer nailed it! That is exactly what we are seeing today in churches across America. All kinds of gimmicks, social programs, elaborate programs to draw people in and a move away from the truths of God found in the Word of God.

Do you know who wrote that?

It was Hal Lindsay from his book – *The Late Great Planet Earth* and it is over 53 years ago that he wrote that, back 1970! And what he saw in his day, has now emerged as the norm in churches!

Make no mistake about it, there is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates say they believe the Bible and yet they deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, they deny the authority of the Scriptures and they twist the Scriptures to fit their own ideas.

There is a departure from the truths of God because these apostates say they are serving God, they use the right language, but they are in fact serving themselves, looking to satisfy their own desires!

That is why we see Christian witches, we see Christian Tarot cards, we see grave sucking where you go to the grave of a departed Christian and lay on the ground and suck up their energy.

I can go on, but you get the idea and if you know the Word of God at all, you can easily see that this is demonic and not Christian, not even close and yet, why are so many following these destructive heresies?

And it is even worse as they deny the deity of Jesus, His virgin birth, His sinless life, the blood atonement, that Jesus is the only way and on and on the doctrines of demons go leading people away from God and not to God!

Make no mistake about it, they are pretenders of the faith, and they have a huge following.

And even though Jude primarily had apostates in mind when he wrote his epistle, his comments could apply to anyone in the church that teaches false doctrine because all of them are dangerous and do irreparable damage to the local church, and to those in it.

One pastor put it like this. He wrote,

“Without question, the greatest threat to the church has always been false teaching. Its subtlety and severity make it a spiritual poison unlike any other.

While external threats - such as religious persecution and the world's animosity are certainly unpleasant, the wounds they inflict are only physical and the injuries they cause only temporary.

The deadliest false teaching, on the other hand, comes not from deceptive, non-Christian religions outside the church - but from spiritual pretenders inside the church. And the resulting damage is far greater than that caused by any external assault; the casualties are spiritual, and the consequences are eternal.

It's no wonder, then, that Jesus warned His followers about the deadly dangers of apostasy:

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.” (Matt. 7:15–20)

In his exhortation to the Ephesian elders, the apostle Paul echoed the Lord’s admonition:

“I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves’ men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”
(Acts 20:29–31)

The rest of the New Testament records similar warnings, instructing believers to guard themselves against the deceptive nature of false teaching masquerading as Christian truth. . . .”

Absolutely. Thus, the warning that Jude gives to us Christians is really a survival manual to live in these last days.

We are to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us. The problem is that many Christians do not see the reality that we are in a battle and thus, they think the Christian life is played out on a playground!

It is not and we need to wake up and stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might because the Devil is trying to trip us up, destroy lives and we are to put on the whole armor of God and take a stand!

And we need to pay attention because the pretenders are here, these apostates and we need to stand strong in the Lord and upon His Word to expose their lies!

Here is a quick outline of this letter or epistle.

1. SALUTATION – JUDE 1-2

2. THE APOSTATES ARE UNMASKED – JUDE 3-16

3. HOW CAN BELIEVERS RESPOND TO THE APOSTASY – JUDE 17-23

4. BENEDICTION – JUDE 24-25

With that said, with this groundwork laid, let's look at Jude chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word. And my focus this morning will be the – **PURPOSE OF JUDE** and how we are to respond to what Jude is calling us to do.

How we are to contend for the faith.

And then in our next study we will look at the concern of Jude for what was happening and how the church seems to ignore what is going on.

JUDE

VERSE 1

As we can see, Jude tells us that he is the writer of this letter and we have seen how this Jude is the half-brother of Jesus. And, as I have said, the name is literally “*Judas.*”

But to avoid connection with Judas Iscariot, the infamous man who betrayed Jesus, most English translators have used the name “*Jude.*”

Now, in knowing that Jude is the half-brother of Jesus, why didn't he just write, “*Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, you know, Almighty God! I am his brother!*”

Because he has now received Jesus as his Lord and Savior and thus, he is a bonds slave of Christ. He is not exalting himself or who he knows, even though he could have!

I remember several years ago we had someone come to do worship for us. And I asked him to do worship songs and he could do one or two of his own songs that he wrote. He was a very famous Christian musician.

So as I am walking up to pray, as the service was about to begin, he walked up with me and he said to me, “*Make sure you let them know that I have been inducted into the Christian Music Hall of Fame!*”

What was wrong with that?

A lot is wrong with that. What is worship about, or I should say who is worship about?

It is about our Lord; it is about Jesus! But now he wanted me to make it about him and what he has accomplished!

Well, you know me, that did not happen. I went up and prayed and we then went into worship, and he did all his songs, no worship songs to allow the congregation to worship Jesus and that was the last time he was invited to do worship for us. I don't care how famous he was, worship is about God and no one else!

For Jude, yes, he was the half-brother of Jesus, but he doesn't play that card, he just says that he is a servant or bonds slave of Jesus Christ!

Now a ***DOULOS*** or bondsman was a slave who was free to go but his love for his master was so great that he wants to serve him all the days of his life, not out of constraint or compulsion, but out of love!

Thus, Jude, like all of us, are bondsmen of Christ, we don't exalt ourselves but the Lord and that is what Jude has done here.

We also see Jude mention his brother James, and he is the one who wrote the epistle of James and was the head of the church in Jerusalem.

As Jude goes on, he tells us who he is writing to.

Jude is writing to Christians, believers, and he identifies them in three specific ways:

THEY WERE CALLED!

Who is calling us or drawing us to Christ?

It is the ***Holy Spirit*** and when He calls, we have the choice to listen and obey or not to listen to His drawing us to Christ.

If you do reject His call, you are committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit or you are rejecting the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in your life, bringing you to Christ.

And folks, you can do that over and over again and each time you do your heart will grow harder and harder until you can no longer be saved!

And yes, I know, there are those people that get saved on their deathbed, praise the Lord for that. But don't take that chance! When the Holy Spirit calls you to Christ you need to respond!

If you have come to Christ, then this is a past event for us, we were called by the Holy Spirit and we received that calling into our lives, we are saved!

Then, after they responded to the ***CALL!***

THEY WERE SANCTIFIED BY THE FATHER!

This speaks of being set apart by God, set apart by the Father as the Master Potter is molding and shaping our lives to be all that He wants them to be.

Now this is a present work of the Father in our lives, and it will continue on until we go to be with Him!

Paul wrote in Philippians 1:6, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**”

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**”

God began the work in us, and He will complete that work that He has begun in us!

But can we lose our salvation? Jude deals with that next, with the third point in regard to who he is writing to.

THEY WERE PRESERVED IN JESUS!

Here we see Jesus as the protector and guardian over our lives.

He is the shepherd who leads us.

Now, where is he leading us? He is leading us to glory and one day we will be taken home to be with Him just as He has told us, just as He has promised us.

You see, Jesus is preparing a new home for our spirit and soul to dwell in, a mansion you might say or a permanent, eternal dwelling place as we are told in John chapter 14.

Thus, we see the future aspect of what Christ is doing – bringing us to glory!

In other words, once we come to Christ our salvation is secure in Him because it is God who is protecting us, keeping us.

Peter put it like this in I Peter 1:5, “**who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**”

I am so glad that it does not say, “*who are kept by the power of Joe . . .*” That would not give me assurance and if you put your name in there it would not give you assurance either. But when God is the One who is keeping us, He will see it through.

Or, as Peter goes on to say, “**receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.**” I Peter 1:9.

What I also want you to see here in this first verse is that Jude does not use the word *Trinity* but as he gives to us the three-fold working of the Godhead, we see that he is clearly showing us this truth.

Look again how he shows us the Godhead: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in our lives!

The Holy Spirit *CALLS* us!

The Father *SANCTIFIES* us!

And Jesus *PRESERVES* us!

Yes, they do so much more in our lives, but this is what Jude is focusing on.

And now that we have come to saving faith, Jude tells us what we can enjoy.

VERSE 2

Jude greets them by saying, “**Mercy, peace, and love**” but not just that, he wants these things to be multiplied in their lives, not just added!

And if you think about it, as Christians, these are the things that our life should be filled with, but many times they are not because we are distracted by all that is happening around us instead of focusing on the Lord.

Let's look at these three things, a little different than Paul's opening salutations, but just as important.

First of all – **MERCY!**

Mercy speaks of not getting what we deserve, which is death because of our sins before a holy and righteous God!

But why don't we get what we deserve – **DEATH?**

Jude speaks of that next as he writes about – **PEACE!**

And when you look at this, this peace is two-fold.

First you must make peace **WITH** God and that is done through Jesus Christ. That is the key!

Paul, in Romans 5:1-2 puts it like this, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

It is only then, after we have made peace **WITH** God that we can enjoy the peace **OF** God in our lives.

It is as Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”**

You see, you can't have the peace *OF* God without first making peace *WITH* God and that can only be accomplished through Jesus Christ, as I have said!

That is where true peace, the peace of God is found, in a relationship with Jesus Christ!

And then, after we receive his mercy and peace through Jesus, Jude speaks of – *LOVE!*

You see, it is out of all of that, it is out of God pouring His love into our lives, that His love, *AGAPE* love will flow through our lives and touch the lives of others.

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:5, **“Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**

You see, the mercy, the peace, the love that God has given to us He wants us to give to others and Jude says may it be multiplied not only into your lives, but out of your lives touching the lives of others!

As Jude goes on to write to these believers, he has a very heavy heart.

Why?

Because of what he is seeing happening in the lives of believers, what they are doing and not doing, and it is grieving him so much that he has to write about it, even though he really did not want to.

And we will dig into that more next time. This morning, as we finish up our study, I want to look at this issue of contending for the faith because, like I have said, there are many out there, many Christians who don't want to cause any trouble, they don't want to offend anyone.

And please understand that I am not speaking of making problems or intentionally offending a person. What I am saying is that when you stand up for righteousness, you will offend people. The light will shine upon the darkness, their sin and it will make them uncomfortable, and they will fight back, mostly with words, but as we have seen in other countries, it can cost you your life.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:10-11, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.”**

This persecution is for righteousness’ sake or when we are standing up for Jesus or living for Him!

Paul expounds on that when he says, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”** II Timothy 3:12. Notice, *WILL* not *MIGHT!*

Listen to what one writer had to say about the church and why we don’t see much persecution in this country for our faith. He wrote,

But by far the greatest reason there is so little persecution is that the church has become like the world. If you want to get along, the formula is simple. Approve of the world’s morals and ethics – at least outwardly. Live like the world lives. Laugh at its humor. Immerse yourself in its entertainment. Smile benignly when God is mocked. Act as if all religions converge on the same road. Don’t mention hell. Draw no moral judgments. Take no stand on the moral/political issues. Above all, do not share your faith. Follow this formula and it will be smooth sailing.

But the fact is, the church must be persecuted or it is no church at all. People need to be told that if they follow Christ, there will be a price to pay. It will affect how they get along at school. It will affect their profile at the club. It will affect how they make their living. . . .

It is a glorious thing when the church and the individual are persecuted for righteousness' sake, because that means they are like Christ.

- R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 74

How true that is and what a lesson for us to learn. Whenever the church has been a friend to the world it is because the church is not shinning for Jesus!

We are in a battle and the church from years ago understood that and they wrote about it. Remember the hymn, *Onward, Christian Soldiers!* Here is just part of that hymn, and it goes like this,

Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before!
Christ, the royal Master,
leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
see his banner go!

Refrain:
Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
going on before!

- Onward, Christian Soldiers

Now some may argue that the church is not at war. We are to be peacemakers. Is that true or is that false?

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 10:34-39 and you tell me if we are at war, or we are living in a peaceful world or that we should be pacifists. He said, **“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”**

How often do you hear a message about that, even though Jesus clearly said it and taught it?

And this is troubling to many people and thus, they avoid what Jesus is saying. For others, it seems confusing because they say that Jesus did come to bring peace.

But here we see that Jesus is saying that He did not come to bring peace and it seems that He has brought division to family and friends, what does that mean?

First of all, Jesus did come to bring peace, a peace between man and God that is only received by His shed blood applied to our lives. The problem with family and friends is many times they are in opposition to this and thus, there is great conflict.

It is amazing to me, but I have seen families so upset because their family member has come to Christ and in this salvation that person has been delivered from drugs and alcohol. You would think they would rejoice but many times they don't because the light of Christ shining in this person is exposing their darkness and they don't like it.

So there is a division and I think many if not all of us can attest to that fact with family and friends when we came to Christ!

So who are you going to serve, Jesus or self?

Jesus gives life, the self-life takes it away!

If you want that joy, die to self, live for the Lord and serve others.

If you want to be miserable, focus on yourself and you will find out you lose, there is no joy in that kind of relationship!

True life is found as we surrender to Him!

Thus, He has called us into service to battle against the demonic world. To battle against sin. To battle against unrighteousness.

That is what Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:10-13, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

And then Paul speaks of the armor of God that we are to put on. Why?

Because we are in a battle and we need to be wearing the right equipment if we are going to fight in this spiritual battle that is before us!

And here is where many are confused or they don't want to deal with this issue, it is too troubling for them. This battle we face is not a physical battle and thus, we can't win this battle with guns and bombs and things like that!

Then what kind of battle is it?

It is a spiritual battle and thus, it must be fought with spiritual weapons!

Remember what Paul wrote, **“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”** Ephesians 6:11-12.

We are in a spiritual battle that is played out in the physical world and the schemes of the Devil are worked out in the lives of people.

Read Daniel chapter 10 and see how these demons are over the political landscape and we see that played out in our world today as they promote all kinds of sinful practices trying to get us to accept them as normal and not as sin. (Daniel 10:13, 20)

Please understand that from the very beginning of the Church’s existence, it has always been understood that Christians were soldiers fighting in a battle. And not only soldiers, but we are called wrestlers, contenders, fighters!

What are we fighting?

Like I have said. We are battling the world and its evil ideologies that it wants to conform us to!

We battle the flesh which the world tries to entice us with so we move away from God and into sin!

We battle the devil who wants to get us to compromise our faith!

We battle sin which is a result of giving into the flesh!

We battle materialism that tries to draw us away from God.

We battle pride which makes us think more highly of ourselves.

In other words, we are in a battle, we are at war and we need to pay attention and we need to put on the whole armor of God!

In I Timothy 6:12 Paul tells Timothy and us to “**Fight the good fight of faith . . .**” It is a battle!

That word “**Fight**” is the Greek word *AGONIZOMAI*, (ag-o-nid’-zom-ahee) and it speaks of contending with an adversary, or to labor fervently, it is a struggle. We get our English word “*agonize*” from this Greek word!

Let me show you what is happening by looking to our neighbors to the north, Canada. And if you are having trouble believing that we are in a war, I think this will clear it up. This article is from January of 2022, so a little over a year ago. We are told,

Christianity being ***OUTLAWED*** in Canada: Pastors will be imprisoned while the government promotes LGBT pedophilia and exploitation of children . . .

So-called “*conversion therapy*” is now banned in Canada, and thousands of churches across the country are bracing for impact as the new law threatens to criminalize pastors for teaching the Bible.

More than 4,000 church leaders are reportedly standing together in protest against the rule, which makes it a crime to try to “*convert*” homosexuals and other members of the LGBTQ community out of their “*lifestyle.*”

Even those who would willingly seek out conversion will no longer be allowed this freedom in Canada, as pastors there are now prohibited from offering any sort of counseling or therapy on the matter. . . .

“Ultimately, the dissenters, the ones who will not cave in, are going to be those who are faithful to the Bible,” MacArthur is quoted as saying about it. *“And that’s what’s already leading to laws made against doing what we are commanded to do in Scripture, which is to confront that sin. And that’s just going to escalate.”*

“The fact that they identified it as a criminal conduct that could give you as much as five years in prison takes it to a completely different level, because Canadian pastors have been put in jail for just having church services.”

A similar push towards criminalizing Christianity is also occurring in the United States, though you might say that it is still in the infancy stages of a nationwide rollout.

Left-leaning states like California, New York and New Jersey have passed similar bills criminalizing conversion therapy at the state level, as has Nevada. MacArthur says this is a disturbing trend that American Christians must fight against if they hope to preserve freedom of religion in this country.

“I think it’s reached a level there in Canada that it hasn’t yet reached here, but it’s coming,” he warns. *“It’s coming fast.”*

“I believe our government is capitalizing on a politically expedient segment of its constituency in an effort to further dismantle Western civilization as we know it. To do this, it must outlaw its very foundation, which is rooted in a Judeo-Christian worldview. Bill C-4 is another brick laid in this effort and is evidence that our government is under the judgment of God,” he added.

I am here to tell you that it doesn't matter if you think we are in a war or not!

It doesn't matter if you want to be in this or you don't!

The reality is, there is a war against our faith and are we going to be willing to stand strong and fight against it?

Jude is warning us and then it is up to us to listen and obey or by like a dead fish and just float down the stream of life being conformed to this world.

And many Christians and churches, I am sorry to say, are nothing more than dead fish floating down stream and they are being conformed to this world.

Just look at what they stand for and you can clearly see that they are not earnestly contending for the faith.

They are not that salmon that swims against the current of this world, as hard as it can be, as treacherous as it can be, because it is much easier to do nothing.

But let me say this. If you do nothing, then you can't complain about all that is coming to America! We see it in Canada, Europe and other places and it is coming here as well.

As one writer put it regarding this message of Jude,

[Jude's] message of judgment is especially relevant to people today, for our churches are prone to sentimentality, suffer from moral breakdown, and too often fail to pronounce a definitive word of judgment because of an inadequate definition of love. Jude's letter reminds us that errant teaching and dissolute [immoral] living have dire consequences.

- Thomas R. Schreiner, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude, The New American Commentary pp. 403-404

Again, we will look at this next time as Jude admonishes us to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us and then we will look at apostasy and apostates as Jude goes on to speak of them.

But again, if we fail to heed this warning by Jude, we will compromise our faith and in the end, it will all be vanity for us because we will end up with a different Gospel, a different Jesus and a different Bible!

Remember when we opened up and I spoke about the root problem today, ***“The root cause . . . has to do with the condition of our hearts. Are we drawn to the beauty and power of God’s good Word because we are drawn to God Himself?”***

How much do we love God?

How much do we read is Word is the evidence of how much we love God.

And not just reading, but then applying the truths of God found in the Word of God to our lives.

And I will close with this. If you, as a Christian are not contending for the faith, you better watch yourself because the devil never gives up, he wants to destroy your faith and your witness.

Thus, the purpose of Jude is to – ***CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS!***