

## **Jude 1:16-25**

### **“The Keys to a healthy church”**

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#### **I. Intro.**

This morning we shall finally conclude our examination of Jude’s little letter. At first our focus will be upon the final evaluation of false teachers, and it has to do with listening to what they say and not just how they sound. From there you will notice Jude’s words change as he introduces a change of focus. Look at verse 17 and then again in verse 20 and the words “But you, beloved”. These words indicate that Jude has no longer revealing the character and actions of false teachers and has now moved upon the believer’s responsibility of what to do about this condition that has crept into the church unnoticed (verse 4). The believer’s responsibility is twofold based upon the use of that phrase:

- A. Vs. 17-19 The first is in the negative as they need to remember the words that they had been taught by the apostles in regard to the reality of ambitious false teachers and their characteristics. There ought to have been no place for a surprise invasion these false teachers were hidden at all and in fact were in plain sight and easy to spot.
- B. Vs. 20-23 The second is in the positive as they needed to be actively involved in their own spiritual maturity and growth. This would involve prayer, a concerted effort to find our only security in the love of God as well as our only identity in the work of Christ on our behalf. We would know that we have accomplished these things in how we would be treating others Jude reveals.

The final section of verses 24-25 is a benediction who solidifies the inevitable success of the above two things and that is trusting only in God to do the work as it is only Him who will receive the glory.

## II. Vs. 16 Three indicators in the words of false teachers

Jude in verse 4 indicated the need for the urgency of this letter by saying that these false teachers had “crept in unnoticed”. Their stealth wasn’t based upon a disguise but rather the ignorance of the body of Christ. The remainder of this letter was all designed to remind his readers on what to look for in these false teachers. Finally Jude reminds his readers to be aware of three things about the content of the teaching of these false teachers that they need to be aware of that will enable them to determine that they are indeed false teachers. The problem seems to be that the body of Christ paid greater attention to the “*Way something was taught*” instead of “*What was being taught*”! It is interesting to note that in verse 17 Jude will remind them to “*Remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles..*” and here before us are three words that indicate someone is a false teacher:

1. ***Grumblers and complainers***: They are consistent in their complaining against God but done so in such a way like the cooing of a dove, an undertone of murmuring against the Lord. This word isn’t found any other place in the New Testament and reminds of the Israelites in the wilderness. The word “complainers” in the Greek means to find fault and speaks of a continual discontentment in their hearts that they “deserve and have earned better”.
2. ***Walking around according to their own lusts***: They have a spoken planned course of conduct, and it is to follow and walk after the passionate cravings of their fallen flesh. They pursue the things of their former life and teach others to do so as well.
3. ***Mouths of great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage***: To aid in their false teaching they use words that flatter the flesh of those they teach to gain advantage for their own profit. They were better known for their swelling words than they were for the gospel. Their promotion to the pulpits was based upon popularity that was won by flattery instead that they were in possession of the Mind of Christ.

## III. Vs. 17-19 Remembering the Word

Jude now moves his readers into two things that they can do to “contend for the faith” and you will notice them by the phrase “But you, beloved” verses 17 and 20. Breaking this down I notice four truths that Jude closes with regards to accomplishing our contending for our faith:

- Vs. 17-19 Be aware
- Vs. 20-21 Be growing
- Vs. 22-23 Be reaching out
- Vs. 24-25 Be dependent

Vs. 17-19 The exhortation for the believer is to “be aware” and before the believer can be aware they need to know where they are to turn to hear the warning and it is in the “***words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ***”. There are far too many Christians that will miss the warning because they are not listening to the “Words spoken” in the Bible and have instead turned to competing words written by popular teachers. It seems to me that Christians will turn to these competing authors as they heap up teachers that tickle their fancy instead of the “inspiration of the Scriptures”. They don’t have time to study God’s word but all the time in the world for some modern author. The warning is found many places as we are told in 1 Cor 2:13. In Acts 20:29 Luke records Paul’s practice of teaching the whole council of God’s Word instead of some five-week topical teaching series where the teacher picks the topic and finds the verses that support their view of the topic. The chief characteristic of these false teachers that Jude calls “mockers” is that they have a disdain for teaching through the Bible verse by verse line upon line. Such a practice will aid in their quest to follow their own lusts and passions. Such a practice of topical teaching also causes “divisions” as they can stay upright on their hobby horses. Nothing speaks to more about the time that we now live in than the lack of verse-by-verse Bible teaching by those who are called to teach God’s word. ***I like my coffee black and my Bible as it is written! I don’t need an entertainment media group to be Jesus’ apologist or populist making Him more relatable and presentable to today’s Christian. And at the risk of offending the norm I don’t need to watch season 3 of the “Chosen” to see the “Chosen One”, I have God’s Word by the Holy Spirit!*** There is no better sound in a church that illustrates

worship then the turn of pages in their Bibles! All of which leads to three conditions in the hearts of both false teachers as well as those that listen to their teaching:

1. **Sensual persons**: Paul said in 1 Cor. 2:14 that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. The word used for “sensual” in the Greek is a word that means of the “realm of the senses” and as such they can only be moved if it moves their emotions. Emotionally driven entertainment aimed at the senses of the Christian as the basis of moving them instead of God’s Word. I’m not opposed to having a display of emotions but that is not how I determine if something is truth. Instead I just read God’s word!
2. **Cause divisions**: Here Jude write of the set off of an Idea or concept through selecting a topic to the exclusion of the whole council of God’s word on a subject. Often a person who teaches this way will read the Word of God then launch out into a subject that has nothing to do with the text or the context of the passage. The reason for this using that which is inspired for something that clearly isn’t.
3. **Not having the Sprit**: There are two ways of looking at this statement of Jude: One is that they are devoid of the Spirit of God which means that they aren’t believers. The second is that they are so caught up in the emotionalism that they are unable to properly divide the word of God.

#### IV. Vs. 20-21 Four keys to spiritual health

Jude now move to second thing necessary for the believer to contend for the faith and this one is activated in the positive as they are to be growing spiritually in their own maturity. The question is “How can a believer build themselves up spiritually”? Act’s 20:32 gives us the answer as we are told in Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders when he said, “*I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*” And here he lists four keys to spiritual health which cause the believer to be less vulnerable to false teachers.

1. “***But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith.***.”: The “building ourselves” is only as strong if the foundation has been upon the Solid Rock of Christ. Paul spoke of this to the Church in Ephesus 2:20 when he wrote, “*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.*” For the Christian to remain strong they will need to build with the same materials in which the foundation of their faith has been established by, namely the Word of God. There are far too many of the faith today that have shipwrecked their faith as they have not continued to build with the same material them what their faith was established in. Let this be a warning for the believer NOT to substitute the material of the Word of God for the opinions of men! The apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:5 that, “*whoever keeps the*

*Word, truly the love of God is perfected in Him. By this we know that we are in Him.*”

2. **“Praying in the Holy Spirit..”**: The prayer that Jude is writing of is that which produces in our hearts both our unconditional surrender of obedience but also that which realizes that such surrender is our life breath to unending communion that produces His fruit in our lives.
3. **“Keep yourselves in the love of God..”**: At the beginning of this little letter Jude wrote that the believer was **“preserved in Jesus Christ”** and now they are encouraged to reside in **“God’s love”**. I can’t help but notice that by maintaining the first two will be encircled by His love. Jude had written of the fact that the fallen angels had failed to keep their proper domain and had left their abode and because of this departure will receive that for which they left chains and darkness. What a reminder for the believer that when we seek other things in our life instead of the Love of God we will only find darkness and bondage. We are not told to keep our hearts aflame with love for God but instead to remind ourselves continually of His love for us!
4. **“Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”**: Finally the believer is to continually realize that this life IS NOT all there is. The atmosphere is to be that of continual hope and eager anticipation of the reality that this life is short, but eternity is never ending!

#### V. Vs. 22-23 Reaching the lost

Jude’s next words focusses upon three groups of people:

- Those that need compassionate tenderness
- Those that require urgent boldness in their decision to follow Christ
- Those that require the believer to use caution lest they be contaminated by what afflicts the false teacher

Jude who has spent the entirety of this letter to warn the church of false teachers now spends the final words to reach those who have been entangled by such teaching. To contend for our faith is a serious matter and requires discernment in how to approach the person who is contaminated by false teaching.

#### VI. Vs. 24-25 The promise to believers

The final two verse are a benediction that follows, and I paraphrase: **“I have bidden you to keep yourselves in the love of God, I have warned you against the lack of piety and impurity of false teachers. But there is one last thing you must understand: You cannot attain to the one, or guard yourselves from the other, in your own strength. You can only do so in close connection to Him which has been provided by Him in His power and not your own.”** There is a two-fold promise to the believer:

1. It is ONLY Jesus that enables us to NOT stumble. Apart from His work we are prone to the fall!
2. It is equally true that it is ONLY in Jesus that we will be presented faultless before the presence of His glory.