

Title: Why, Jude?
Text: Jude 3-4
Theme: The purpose of the letter
Series: Jude #2
Prop Stmt: All believers are charged with defending the faith from perversion morally and theologically.

Read Text:

Loving someone means that you protect them. Some of you have heard the stories. Some of you have experienced it. A child is abused by a family member and another family member knows, but doesn't stop it. That child is left with many unanswered questions that demand a response. Why would someone do this to me? And how could someone who is supposed to love me let this happen? Now, I am not trying to rip open scabs. I am trying to show that fundamentally, we all understand that true love means to protect. If I love you, I will try to protect you. If there is someone who is a cancer in the church, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a promoter of false teaching or someone who is fishing for immoral reasons, what must we do? We must confront that. We must. Church discipline is a gift that Christ has given to his church in order for the flock to express sacrificial love for the protection of one another. Otherwise, we would be allowing abuse of the flock to go on and the sheep would have every right to ask, "How could you let this happen?" In addition to that, what do we say to the Chief Shepherd when asked about our stewardship of our church? Love for God, love for the gospel, and love for one another motivates and compels our commitment to addressing moral perversion and false theology. These sorts of things grieve us. We don't like to talk about these sorts of things, much less have to deal with them. Don't we all kind of hope that we will never have to address these things? Sure, just like we hope that no one in our family ever gets sick or ever has problems. But, we do. And God knows this. He knows that his churches will face issues and that we will be hesitant to address them. We need to be challenged and encouraged to do what is right, to do it in the right spirit and for the right reasons.

Verses 3-4 answer the question of why the book of Jude was written. Jude obviously loves these believers. He reminds them in v.1 that they are beloved in God the Father. He prays in v.2 for mercy, peace and love to be multiplied to them. He calls them beloved in v.3 and then in vs. 17 and 20. Jude loves them and although he wants to write to them about the gospel that they share (3a) and probably wants to delight in the encouragement that comes from considering all that they, together have in Christ. The opening phrase of verse 3 gives us the impression that Jude had already started to craft the letter in his mind. However, (and this is a big however) he becomes aware that there is an enemy who is not only at the gate, but is in the camp. Like Joshua after Ai, Jude has to expose the problem and deal with it. "*I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith.*" This is actually a very strong statement. Jude is made aware that these believers were facing an emergency situation that demanded an urgent response. He is responding urgently in hopes that they will respond urgently. He is also responding lovingly in hopes that their urgent response will be marked by love for God, the truth and one another.

Verses 3 and 4 can be summarized by: The faith and the enemy.

I. **The Faith that demands our protection** (3)

Let's start with this word, contend. It means to do battle whether as an athlete or a soldier. Here Jude uses it for believers. You have to be engaged in helping to address issues as they arise in the church. You cannot run from this. If you fail to do this, you will be derelict in your duty as a believer. Sure, it is way easier to let someone else worry about this. It is way easier to hide and stay away and out of the fray until it blows over or goes away. But hold the phone! Have you not heard the gospel? Why have you heard the gospel? Why have you been able to read in your own language, the Bible? Because people died for this. They gave their lives defending the purity of the gospel from those who wanted to pervert it. They sacrificed everything so that you could have the Word of God in your own language. They knew that it was that important. And we not only have this trust that has been given to us, but we are called to care more about the next generation than we do our own comfort. Notice in v. 3 that...

A. **The faith is defined.**

“the faith” This refers to a clearly identifiable and recognized series of beliefs that served as the foundation of the church and the truths that defined them and held them together. The faith refers to the doctrines of Scripture. These revealed truths about who God is, about the authority and integrity of his Word, about the person and work of Christ, about the Holy Spirit, about our sin, about our redemption, about our sanctification, about the church and about the future are the truths we see from Scripture, we believe together, we are defined by, are held together by and therefore must be taught and defended. If these truths are ignored, then they will be replaced and instead of being a church held together by the faith, we will be a little society held together by our history, by our traditions, by our social life, by our do-goodism and charity stuff. That is why you must get theological content in this church. Sermons and lessons need to be practical, for sure, but they have to be grounded doctrinally. You have to know what “the faith” is so that you can smell the stink of the false stuff. We teach and emphasize doctrine not to be heady, intellectual, stuffy, prideful, or divisive, but the opposite. Deep thoughts of God are so that we will have great love for God. Good, meaty theology helps us understand the gospel and its implications and its internal consistencies. God's Word is one network of truth. It stands together and you can't pull out the I-beam doctrine of inspiration and inerrancy of God's Word without the structure collapsing.

Notice that “the faith” is once, for all.

B. **The faith has been delivered** (revealed).

Jude says that the faith “*was once for all delivered to the saints.*” Once, for all. Think about that: Once – that means that the faith is not evolving. It has been delivered as a package deal. It has been given once, for all. That is, we do not add to it or update it. If you know anything about the Mormon religion, they keep adding to their beliefs. The Roman Catholic church is at the mercy of a pope or a council coming up with some new things. Progressive Christians are looking for ways to ignore, water down or deny Scriptures explicit teaching on homosexuality and lesbianism. We are not going to wake up tomorrow and God is going to say that sexual relations outside of marriage can be a good thing when people really care about each other, or when they

are really lonely. The faith, (what we believe and how we are called to live) has once, for all been delivered and is not subject to change no matter what dream, vision or voice someone says they experienced or heard. Therefore, contending for the faith involves protecting it from people adding things to it that are not there and protecting it from people who want to deny things or ignore things that are already there. It also involves rightly understanding what is already there.

The faith is to be defended and fought for because there are enemies of the faith, who are obviously enemies of God.

II. **The Enemy that demands our response** (4)

Beloved, here is the pattern. There are some people within the church, who have claimed to be followers of Christ and they give the right answers, but there they never embraced the gospel from the heart. The church was just another vehicle to make them look good for feel good about themselves. Now, in the moment, that is not clear. But, because there has never been a genuine change of heart, there is not a change of affections and values. An unregenerate heart is going to pursue unregenerate desires. But, how do you do that when God's Word is so clear? You attempt to change it. You attempt to find ways to re-interpret the plain meaning of things in order to give an excuse to pursue your own desires.

A. Be aware of those who are not believers but pretend to be (ungodly – without God).

I remember in my early days here, that I thought that if I would just faithfully preach God's Word, and be a nice pastor, that I would really not face too many problems. After all, people would figure things out and I could just gently nudge and encourage and we'd all get on the same page. That naivete was blown up pretty quickly. I remember having lunch with a guy and telling him that the decisions he was making were in blatant contradiction to God's Word. He looked at me rather unimpressed by my concern and said, "I'll take my chances." I didn't know what else to say. I was stunned that someone could attend church, profess to be a follower of Christ and think like this. I was dumbfounded. If I was thinking about this text, I would have realized that God is not dumbfounded. It is grievous, but it happens. There are those who infiltrate the church and who by their teaching and by their lifestyle

1) Their judgment was predicted a long time ago.

What does Jude mean by this? I think we get a good idea from the next few verses where we are reminded of what happened to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. The point of this is that there have always been people who are the enemies of God and his Word. So, the fact that within the people of God now (in local churches) there are certain individuals who try to come in and take advantage of people in the church, try to influence them in sinful ways is not new. But, when it happens it is discouraging. So, this reminder is so needful on two levels. 1) Do not be surprised when it happens. It has been predicted. It happened in the past, like Pharaoh. God told Moses to give Pharaoh God's Word. And God told Moses that Pharaoh would not listen. God knows who his children are and who is enemies are. It may

surprise us when someone turns out not to be genuine, but it does not surprise God. 2) The enemies of God and his church will not win. Long ago they were designated for condemnation.

Proverbs 16.4, “*The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.*”

How does David respond when it looks as if evil and evil doers are getting the upper hand?
Psalm 37.1-9

2) They are without God (and this will become evident)

The second way these infiltrators are described is as being “ungodly.” This term describes both a condition and actions. They live as if God is not in their life because God is not in their life. Ungodly means to be without God.

The purpose of this letter is to encourage us and equip us to contend for the faith. You have to stand up and be willing to address the tough issues. Do you see how this point helps us do this? The reason why churches (denominations, seminaries, mission agencies) lose their way and go sideways is because people are either ignorant about important matters of doctrine, or they are unwilling to address them. As much as you and I may not like conflict, there are times when we are called to confront issues. There is a proper way to do it. And we are called to do it humbly and lovingly. But we are called to do it.

I have a friend in the ministry who needs to address some issues in his church. He went to his leadership and while they understand the issues, they are not willing to address them. The

B. Be aware of those who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality.

This is interesting, isn't it? Jude says that they pervert, that is, they twist, they distort, they use something that is intended for one thing for something completely different. They take something that is good and use it for something that is bad. Do you remember Dr. Fata, the local oncology doctor who gave cancer treatment drugs to patients who did not need them and in some cases did not have cancer so he could collect insurance money? That is perversion. He took the profession of medicine which is designed to help people and used it to intentionally harm people. The grace of God is another way to describe the gospel. The gospel is the good news that even though we are sinners who have rebelled against God and deserve his righteous wrath, that instead of pouring out that wrath upon us, he poured it out upon his Son, Jesus Christ. God did not leave us to ourselves to pay for our sins because that would destroy us. He sent Jesus to this world to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus lived the life that we could not live and died the death that we could not die. His death pain in full for the sins of every single person who would ever believe in him. Because of Christ, God forgives and declares righteous every person who turns from their sin and trusts in Christ. That is God's grace!

Now, the way you pervert the grace of God is that you unhinge God's grace from the death of Christ. You unhinge God's grace from his justice. You act as if God is a sentimental, tolerating, pushover whose job is to pretend that everyone is fine. When God's grace is explained without

the backdrop of God's righteousness, justice and holiness, then God's grace is perverted. When that happens, God is viewed as someone who condones sin instead of condemning it. If God did not condemn sin, then why did Jesus die?

In our culture it is assumed that you are hooking up with people all the time. If you are single and you are in a relationship and you are not sexually active, the world thinks that there is something fundamentally wrong with you. The cultural norm is not just sexually permissive, but it is almost sexually demanding. The same thing can be said about our culture's view of LGBTQ. The culture started to tolerate it. Then it began to accept it. Now it is championing it and soon, it will not tolerate those who do not accept it. Churches are either echo chambers of the world or they are light houses. An echo chamber only reverberates what the world is already believing and saying. A light house is pointing the way to safety. Right now, there is tremendous pressure in our culture to champion LGBTQ. Churches that are echo chambers do what the culture has done. They stopped speaking out against it. Then they began to tolerate it. Then they began to accept it and many now ordain people who are living in open defiance to God's Word.

The process is rather simple. Ignore the parts of the Bible that address these issues. Then, find a way to re-interpret them or explain them away. Embrace views that sound sophisticated and elite but that give an excuse to do what unregenerate people want to do. But it doesn't stop there because you cannot deny the moral demands of God without denying God. Look at the next phrase. *"Who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ."*

C. Be aware of those who deny Christ.

How is Christ denied? He is denied as Master and as Lord. Well, that makes sense doesn't it? Christ is defined as a good example, a nice person, a good teacher, a do-gooder who healed people and fed people. What is missing in that? Christ is the Sovereign King of this universe and this world is his and he will have his kingdom and he will have his way. Be aware of those who deny the authority of Christ so that they can make their laws that give them permission to live as they want.

I want you to know your Bibles! I want you to read them. I would like everyone of you who can read to read through the Bible this year and if you cannot read, then listen to it. When you look at the whole picture you see that historically the biggest problems that the people of God faced was not the enemy out there, but the enemy within. The near catastrophe of Ai was not the defenses of the city and the fighting skill of Ai's soldiers, it was the sin of Achan and the failure of Joshua to realize that they had sin in their own camp.

Do you realize that you are responsible for the health of your church?

Do you realize your need to be theologically informed and well-taught?

Do you realize our need to guard our own hearts way more than being concerned with what is going on out there? The church is part of the kingdom that will never end. This is our priority. Don't give that up.

Do you see how God's love for us and our love for God and one another motivates our commitment to clarifying and maintaining biblical standards of sexuality and morality?