

I completely get it when you hear the title of the series, the Beatles tune runs through your head. I'm glad we were able to at least allow that to get out for a little bit. The interesting thing is the Billboard top 100 says that it's one of the top ten songs of all time, "Hey Jude", so whenever you hear that phrase, it's not uncommon to think about that song. One of the interesting things about that song is that a lot of kind of Beatles nuts and Beatles fans have always thought about what was the meaning behind that song? Some of them have conscripted a bit of a sinister meaning to that song, kind of saying that's a drug song or whatever, but they say that about all the Beatles' songs. The interesting thing is, there's a few of the Beatles' songs that the Beatles said were drug songs, like Daytripper. Hello? That's just straight up about drugs. They asked McCartney and Lennon about that and they went, "Yep. That's what that's about." They're pretty honest, actually, about their songs and some of the meaning behind them.

I found it interesting that finding the meaning out of this song, "Hey Jude", that Paul McCartney wrote. Here's what happened. It was actually a song written for John Lennon's youngest son, or his young son, Julian. John Lennon left Julian and Julian's mother for Yoko Ono at one point, and McCartney was a good friend to them and still would come in and check on John's former wife and little Julian. One day when he was going to kind of just check in with them and say hello and play with Julian a little bit, he was trying to think of a way to cheer him up, so he was kind of writing a song in his head on the way to see him. The song, at that point, said, "Hey Jules, don't make it sad. Take a sad song and make it better." That's where it began. That was beginning in McCartney's head and then eventually he didn't like the way "Hey Jules" sounds, even though his name was Julian, and he changed it to "Hey Jude" because that sings better and it's a bit of a nickname. The song kind of morphed into different than just being about a kid, because it took on some other adult meanings. They asked John Lennon about it and he was like, "That's just how Paul writes. It's music first and then he just makes up words.", or whatever.

That's kind of how that went in terms of the song. What's interesting about that is the core of the song was actually for the purpose of Paul McCartney telling a little kid to hang in there and to fight for the relationships that he has in his life with his mom and then with his dad and with his dad's new flame. He was basically just saying, "Fight for the relationships that you have in your life."

As we turn our attention to an actual book in the Bible called Jude, which is, many scholars say, the most overlooked book in the entirety of the New Testament. Some of you are going, "Yeah. I've never read it. I didn't even realize it was there." It's one chapter. It's kind of tucked in. People don't preach it and you don't hear from it very often. I get it. What's interesting about this book, Jude, is that name, Jude is actually also a shortened nickname. Just like the song was written "Hey Jude" for a boy named Julian, this name, Jude, is actually a nickname as well. I'll show it to you in just a second. Here's how Jude opens up. I

won't necessarily have to say chapter one, because it's just got one chapter. I'm just going to refer to the verses.

Verse one. In the beginning, it says, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." This is how the author identifies himself. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James. When he identifies himself as Jude, here's why. That is short for his real name, and his real name is Judas. Some of you are going, "Wait a second. You mean the person that betrayed Jesus has a book in the Bible?" No. A person with the same name as the person who betrayed Jesus has a book in the Bible. No wonder he used his nickname, right? The name Judas, every time we hear it, we're thinking about a betrayer, the guy that betrayed Jesus, and that was Judas from Iscariot. Judas was a very common name in the ancient world, just like Jesus was a common name. Judas actually comes from the word Judah, which was one of the tribes of Israel. There's a reason that Jude shortened his name so that it wouldn't cause any confusion in the early church when they were reading it, going, "Hey, wait a minute. Is this ... I'm not reading that." It's not that. He's just called Jude.

What's helpful about that is we're reminded, even in this day and age, that nobody names their kids Judas for a reason. There's a reason he shortened his name. Nobody goes, "Let's call him Judas. Little baby Judas." No one does that because every other family in the neighborhood would be like, "That's great. My kids aren't playing with him. There's no chance. He's not coming to my house. I don't trust him. His name's Judas." In fact, you can find this ... it's interesting, we won't name our kids that. We won't even name our dogs that, and we'll name our dogs all kinds of stuff. We'll name our dogs Caesar, Nero, Napoleon. We will not call our dogs Judas. All of those people were bad, by the way. There's a reason that he shortened his name in the very beginning.

Then here's how Jude, Judas, describes himself. He describes himself as a servant of Jesus Christ. For those of you that realize what Jude is doing here, Jude is kind of borrowing from Old Testament allusion, because what happened in the Old Testament is that there were both prophets and kings who would refer to themselves as servants of Yahweh, servants of the Lord. What Jude is doing here is he's doing something really interesting in the very beginning of the letter. He's actually shouting out to the divinity of Jesus in the very beginning of the letter by saying, just as the prophets and just as kings like David referred to themselves in relationship with God as servant of God, servant of Yahweh, so too Jude says I am a servant of God and his name is Jesus Christ. That's what Jude is doing right from the outset of this. He's saying I'm a servant of Jesus Christ.

Then he says, to identify himself further, "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James." There were lots of James in the context of the early church, but in this letter that is being written, he's referring to James who is the most influential, or one of the most influential figures in the church of Jerusalem at the time. James, as you know, was the one who, when they had the Council of Jerusalem where both Peter and Paul were present, you can read about it Acts

15 and following, when they were present, here's what happened. They all spoke their piece about how they were going to minister the gospel in the context where there were now Gentiles and Jews. How are we going to communicate the message of the gospel to both Gentiles and Jews? They all talked, and then James, if you read the account, James kind of had the last word and said, "Okay. Let's do this." And they did that. James was a very influential voice.

If you remember who James is, James was the half brother of Jesus. Do you remember that? James only believed in Jesus after the resurrection, but then became the influential leader in the church of Jerusalem. The reason he was the half brother of Jesus was because they shared the same mother but they didn't share the same dad. Everybody with me? Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

If James is the half brother of Jesus and Jude is the brother of James, that makes Jude the half brother of Jesus as well. If we were following along in the gospels we'd be able to pick it up, because Jesus basically helped us to see that in Matthew 13. It says, "When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there and coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in the synagogue. They were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary and aren't his brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?'" We see it in the gospels, right, but sometimes we didn't have the opportunity to put that together when we were starting to look at who's writing this. Are all of you going, "I'm learning some things," at this point? And we're just talking about the introduction. Are you with me? You're learning some things about this really small book.

My hope today is that pastors who might be listening, watching us online, watching us in western New York realize you should also preach the book of Jude. It's called the whole counsel of God, so we can actually preach the wholeness of the Scripture.

We find out who Jude is, right? Jude, Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. Jude could have, if he wanted to, he could have ... wouldn't the temptation be to just go, "Jude, brother of the living Son of God. Listen to everything I say." That would be the temptation, right? But Jude shows an incredible degree of humility in referring to himself as the brother of James and the servant of Jesus Christ. What humility he begins with in this book. It's a great great picture for us.

We know who wrote the book, but to whom is he writing? That's what the latter part of verse one goes on to show us. Here's what it says. He's writing to "those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ." Now leave this up for just a second. Jude, as you will find out or we will find out in the weeks to come, he likes to do things in triplets. Sometimes it's just a form that people use. It was used often in the ancient world. In describing

a certain group of people or describing things, he likes to speak in threes a lot of the time. He uses these verbs. He says, "to those who have been" what?

Called.

Called. Who are what?

Loved.

Loved in God the Father and who are what?

Kept.

Kept for Jesus Christ. You see, this is kind of a triplet kind of way of saying here's who I'm writing to. Christians. I'm writing to believers. He doesn't name a place that he's writing. He's writing to believers all over the place, whoever gets this letter, that are believers who are followers of Jesus Christ who have been called by God, who are loved by the Father and who are kept by the power of Christ. By the way, there are loads of places in the Scripture itself where it talks about all of those things. How we're called by God, how we are loved by the Father, and how we are kept by the power of God and the power of his Spirit.

That's who he's writing to. Then he kind of just launches into, in verse number two, kind of a traditional greeting, which is almost like a prayer. In fact, he uses triplets again. Notice what he says. "Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance." It's just kind of a normal greeting that they would use in the ancient world. Typically in the ancient world they used two things. You would see Paul using grace and peace oftentimes. Here he uses three when he talks about mercy, peace and love. When he says that they may be yours in abundance, some of your translations say, "that it may be multiplied to you." That may be what it says in your translation.

The literal translation just basically means this. "My hope is," Jude says, "that you are filled up with mercy, peace and love." The idea that Jude has here is that's because all of that comes from the Father. It's not just like these things I'm working to obtain. These are all things that come from the Father, that God has shown us mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that God has given us peace with him through what Jesus has done on the cross in taking our sins upon himself, dying and rising from the dead and paying for our sin, and that we can fully experience the love of God in relationship to him because of all that Jesus has done.

This is how Jude sets this up. Jude is the author, and we understand that, and we know that he's writing to believers, but why is he writing? That's what verse three begins to unpack for us. Here's what he says. "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to

God's holy people." You find out something interesting about Jude. When Jude was going to sit down, when he was going to plan the writing of this letter ... By the way, you had to plan this stuff back in the day, right? You didn't just get to instant message somebody or direct message somebody. You couldn't just text them. You had to sit down, you had to write this stuff out, think about how it was going to get there. You paid attention to what you were going to write.

Jude had an intention of writing to the church and what he was going to write to them was this. He was going to write to them about the salvation that they shared. In other words, the glorious news of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and this wonderful transformation in salvation that we all get to embrace together. That was going to be what his letter was going to be about. But he says, I was going to write that, but I felt compelled to urge you to contend for the faith.

If you read this in the original language, and if you actually will read it instead of letting it just sit there as words on a page, what you'll hear is you will hear the emotion and the urgency in Jude's voice. You can hear it through his pen by the Holy Spirit if you'll allow your ears to hear it. He says, "I was going to write to you about this glorious salvation that we share, but I feel compelled to urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people." This is really super strong language. When he says, "I felt compelled" and "I want to urge you". To do what? To contend.

That word contend, by the way, it's not a word we use all the time, but that word's an important word here for Jude because this verse, verse number three, is kind of the thesis verse for the whole letter. That word contend, in the Greek language, is where we get our word agonize. It's from the same root in the Greek language, the word agonize. Here's the idea. This would be the picture. It would be like an athlete that is agonizing in training and in competition to be able to accomplish the goal for which the athlete is shooting for. There is an agonizing kind of pressing forward that goes on in the life of an athlete to be able to get to what they want to be able to do. That's kind of the idea behind what Jude is saying in this context. "Contend for the faith that once for all has been entrusted to God's people."

Now I need you to stop right here and I need you to pay close attention, because if you don't you might miss something. You see, what Jude is talking about here is not just faith. Jude is talking about something that has the definitive article in front of it, "the". The faith. Did you catch that? He's not just talking about faith. He's talking about the faith. I don't want you to miss this. It's very important for us. You see, faith is ... the Bible talks about faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see, right? That's how Hebrews describes that. Faith is kind of that subjective experience that we have of putting our trust in the living Lord Jesus Christ. That's how we are supposed to live. Without faith it's impossible to please God. We are to be people who live by faith. In other words, we put all of our weight and all of our trust upon Jesus in relationship to him. That's faith.

Jude is talking about, listen to this, Jude is talking about the faith. The faith is an objective set of essential truths that must be believed about God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. That's what the faith is talking about. This gospel that is being preached to the world is definitive. It is a set of truth propositions that are to be held on to and believed and to be contended for. There's a difference between just faith and the faith, which is what Jude is saying we must contend for.

He's actually advocating that we contend for both, but he specifically is talking about the faith when he says I'm urging you to contend for the faith. In fact, you see it when the testimony about Paul, when Paul's writing his letter to Galatia. People that didn't know who he was, they knew what he was doing. Listen, in fact, to what it says in Galatians chapter one. Paul says, "I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ." They only heard the report. "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching", what? "The faith he once tried to destroy." Did you catch it? He's preaching what? The faith. It doesn't say he's preaching faith. It says he's preaching the faith he once tried to destroy. The faith is a definitive, objective set of essential truths that are non-negotiable when it comes to the revelation of who God is in Jesus Christ. It is the content of the gospel. That's what we're talking about and that's what Jude is talking about here.

He says you need to contend for the faith, and then notice what he says, continuing on in that verse in Jude three. "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write you and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people." Once for all. That's a really strong statement. In fact, that same exact statement is actually talked about by the writer of Hebrews in reference to Jesus Christ's death and sacrifice. Listen to how the writer of Hebrews says it in Hebrews chapter 10 verse 10. "By that will we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ," listen to it, "once for all." You see, what we have to remember is this. Just as Jesus' sacrifice was once for all, never to be repeated, so too the deposit of truth that we call the faith is a once for all deposit to the people of God, not to be repeated. Why? Because the deposit of truth is about the sacrifice, death, burial and resurrection of the Son of God. Neither of them need to be done over again. They are once for all.

He goes on further to say this in Jude three. "Although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people." Entrusted. You see, ladies and gentlemen, what we have to remember is this. We've been given a deposit of truth that God, by his Spirit, has spoken through the apostles of Jesus and their associates, that we now have as a record for us to be able to know the truth of God and the revelation of who he is. We've been given, listen to this, we've been entrusted with this deposit of truth. You see, this deposit of truth is something that Paul talked about. He talked about it to the church in Corinth and he talked about it to Timothy. You remember when

the New Testament was being put together, all of this was oral, early on. They were talking about these things. They were communicating these things.

In fact, you can see it show up before all of the writings have been put together in what we call the New Testament. There was an oral tradition that was being passed down from the apostles who were teaching, to those who they were ministering to, and then you would repeat the truths of the gospel orally. In fact, listen to what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15 talking about the gospel. He says, "Brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you." Listen to this. "Otherwise you have believed in vain, for what I received," leave it right here for a second, "I passed on to you."

Listen to this. Do you know that this same phrase, passed on, that Paul uses, the same exact Greek phrase is the same exact Greek phrase Jude uses for entrusted. Same exact thing. I passed on to you as of first importance. Here's what he's saying, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve." Here's what Paul's saying to Corinth. He's saying there is this deposit that I am giving to you about the gospel, and there are some objective truths related to the gospel that are not to be trifled with. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scripture. He was raised again on the third day, according to the Scripture. He appeared as witnesses to all of those people that he had risen from the dead. Don't mess with that. I gave it to you. You received it. I have passed it on to you and entrusted this truth to you.

Paul said the same thing to Timothy. Listen to what he says in 2 Timothy 1. He said, "Timothy, what you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. Guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you. In other words, Paul is saying I have given you a deposit of truthful content related to the gospel. I want you to make sure that you steward that and that you guard that with all of your heart.

You see, in the early church, this was passed on orally until it got written out. Eventually we got all of the books of the New Testament where people realized these are circling around the body of Christ now. We can affirm that these are from the hand of an apostle or an associate of an apostle, kind of an apostle approved writing that have been influenced by the Holy Spirit. We can take all of these together now as understanding the body of the truth content that we are to guard as a deposit given to us. This body of material that we call the New Testament ... I'm going to use rough kind of time frames here, so you don't have to get too nit-picky. Let's just say it's all done in 100 A.D., that the last writing has happened and that all of the body of that material is done in 100 A.D. Now we've got all of this material. Do you know what they did in the early church? They actually summarized this material and said these are things that we need

to understand and know, and they can't be trifled with. They can't be messed with.

In fact, within 50 years of this finally being done, in 150 A.D., there were creeds that had been established in the early church, one called the Apostles' Creed, not because the apostles wrote it, but because it was written to say this is what the apostles have been teaching us, that we have to guard as a deposit that has been entrusted to us and we must contend for. Nobody messing with the truth of the gospel that's been handed down to us.

What I want us to do in this moment is I want us to be able to reflect on the truthfulness of this summary. What the Apostles' Creed was was a summary of what the apostles had been teaching at a high level in relationship to the gospel. What I'm going to ask us to do in just a moment is we're going to all read that together, and then we're going to respond to it in worship. Then I'm coming back because I've got a lot more to tell you. If you slip out, I'm going to find you. I've got a lot more to tell you. I'm like half way right at this point, all right?

Let's take a moment in just a moment to read the Apostles' Creed, but I want to make sure you understand something. You're going to come across a word in the Apostles' Creed that you need to make sure you understand what it means. It's the word catholic. Catholic. This is not, in the Apostles' Creed, referring to a denomination or an institution. It is referring to exactly what the word means, which is universal. It means all God's people everywhere. That's what it means. Little c catholic.

Let's take a look at the Apostles' Creed. Read this with me if you will. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day, he arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Do you believe that? Stand together with me and let's respond in worship to that truth that we proclaim and guard.

So that we understand Jude rightly, these are the things that Jude is calling us to contend for. Maybe I could say it very simply this way. Your faith and the faith is worth fighting for. Your faith and the faith is worth fighting for. You see, this is what Jude is calling us toward. In fact, in Jude 3 we see both of those in play. Look what it says. "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share." He's talking about this faith that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ that's transformative. Our faith. He says, "I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people." You see, Jude is calling us to a place to say this. Your faith and the



faith, they're worth fighting for. They're worth fighting for. The reason that Jude is even coming to this place is because obviously there is an issue going on. When he says I'm changing what I was going to write about and now I'm writing about this and I'm calling you to contend for the faith, why?

Verse four tells us. Here's what it says, "because certain individuals, whose condemnation was written about long ago, have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and they deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." You see, there was a reason. In the early church setting, there was a growing apostasy, a growing heresy that was beginning in the early church setting that was starting to become a problem for those apostles who were addressing it and for people like Jude who are addressing it. It would later become known as gnosticism, but in the early church context, they didn't really have a name for it. You see, gnosticism is just a big word coming from the Greek word gnosis. It's gnosis. You're going, "That didn't help me at all. Thanks for that explanation." Here's what the word means. Gnosis means knowledge in the Greek language. If we were to Englishicize this particular ism, it would be knowledge-ism.

That's a terrible way to describe it, but nonetheless, here's what gnosticism was saying in the churches. It was saying, number one, that kind of the idea that they have a secret knowledge that no one else has. In other words, listen to this, we have secret knowledge instead of the public record of the deposit of faith. That's what was going on there. Secondly, they also believed that the spirit was good but the body was bad, and so as a result, they were like, "Do whatever you want. Get involved in whatever you want, whatever level of immorality, it doesn't matter. That's not my spirit. That's just my body participating in that." There were those in the early church that were being lured into this kind of deceptive philosophy.

Gnostics also who had kind of secret knowledge of everything and who thought body bad, spirit good, also had a view of Jesus that was less than orthodox. They would look at Jesus more like an angel as opposed to the very Son of God, the incarnate Son of God. That was going on in the time of Jude's writing in the early church, and he's beginning by addressing that. He starts to talk about the type of people that he's addressing. By the way, I think we can look at the type of people he's addressing and realize that while it might not be gnosticism in name in our context, it bears the mark of that more than it bears the mark of true followers of Jesus.

In fact, I want to show you some of the ways that he described these people. Here's the first way. He said they were deceptive. Let me show you what I mean by that. In Jude chapter four, listen to what it says, "For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago ..." I said chapter four. Verse four, sorry. It has one chapter. I've already established that. "Certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you." When Jude says that their condemnation that these kind of people who are deceptive, that their condemnation has been written about long ago,

Jude is likely referring to that both in the Old Testament where it talked about false prophets, in the inter-testamental period, he's referring to Jewish tradition that writes about some of these things, which, by the way, Jude will quote and we'll see that in later weeks, and then also he's referring to the apostles' teaching, how what they're saying doesn't match up with the apostles' teaching, and as a result, it's condemned in terms of that kind of teaching and thinking.

He says that not only is that the case, but "they've secretly slipped in among you." When you read that in the Greek language, it's really interesting because here's the picture. They didn't come in the front door. They came in the side door. That's the picture in the Greek language. They came in the side door. In other words, they kind of snuck in just a little bit because they didn't want to bring much attention to themselves because they wanted to get accomplished what they were trying to get accomplished, and that was influencing people toward their deceptive philosophies.

In the south we call those people squirrely. Can I use that term? When we say squirrely in the south, what we mean is this. When you say, "yeah", here's how they would say it. "That ol' boy, that boy's squirrely." What they mean when they say that, don't trust them. Don't trust them. You can't pin them down. It's like a squirrel. You're, "Hey. Come here." They're there. Then they're there. You just can't pin them down. They're the kind of people that come into the body of Christ and maybe want to draw an audience with themselves because they have some kind of secret knowledge about something, instead of the public testimony of the gospel and the deposit that we have been given and entrusted with to contend for. The kind of people that want to pretend that they're the only ones that hear from God and that they will tell you what God says and they want to establish with you that they are the ones that can hear from God and you need to always come to them because they can hear from God because they've got some secret understanding. When the Holy Spirit speaks to his church, when the Holy Spirit speaks through his word to every one of us that are a believer.

That's why we believe in the priesthood of the believer as the New Testament talks about. Everyone of us who has the spirit dwelling in us can hear the voice of God's spirit and can discern the truth. Now yes, we've got gifted people that are given to us in the body of Christ that help us along those ways, but we've got to be careful of those people who want to come up and say, "Pastor, here's what the Lord wants you and your church to do." Now, I'm not saying that's ever happened to me. Ah, yeah, lots of times. I'll be like, "Great. Thanks for that. I'll pray about that. I'll share that with some other folks and we'll pray about that together and we'll see what the Lord says." They're kind of looking at me confused, like, "The Lord has already spoken because I'm here." I'm like, "But you ain't Jesus." Neither am I. My name starts with J, but it is not Jesus. It is Jerry. We can hear together. By the way, what we'll do is we'll press this up against the deposit of truth that's been entrusted to us, that was handed down from the apostles of Jesus Christ, inspired by the Spirit of God. I'm going with

them. I'm going with the deposit that's been handed to us and we're going to measure it against that.

They're deceptive. He also goes on to say this. They're ungodly. They're ungodly. I'll show you exactly where I got this from. Here's what it says in verse four. "Certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people." There you go. They're ungodly. Some of you, when you read that, here's what you think to yourselves. When you read ungodly, you might think, "They're atheists." No. That's not at all what that term is talking about. Why would atheists, people who don't believe in God at all, they don't even want to come. They're not involved. They don't want to get involved and slip in the side door and start to bend your ear. They don't even want to do that. They don't care. They don't believe in any of that stuff. Ungodly is not talking about, listen to this, it's not talking about theoretical atheism, as if I don't believe God exists. What it's talking about is practical atheism. You may say that you believe in God, but you live like there's not one. Ungodly. The opposite of what godliness looks like. You are ungodly in the way that you live and believe.

I read a story about a pastor who was preaching in his church about children in their families, and was saying that kids need to be raised in a Christian home, and they need to be invested in so that they know the truth of the gospel and that they need a Christian upbringing. They need all of those things. There was one family that had their whole family in the service, that when they were driving home, as they were driving, they heard their six year old in the back, crying. The mom turned around and said, "Son, what is wrong?" He said, "It's the pastor's message." She said, "What about it?" He said, "That kids need to be raised in a Christian home." She said, "Yeah. Of course. Why is that bothering you?" He said, "Because I want to stay with you and dad."

If it weren't so sad, it would be funny, because the sad reality is this, is that in many places and many homes that name the name of, "Yeah. I'm a Christian.", or, "I show up to church or whatever," but our kids don't even really see the reality of our belief in God. That the life choices that we make, we could make perfectly fine without him. We don't need to trust him and serve him and do all that stuff. We can do all of these things without God. That's practical atheism. We name him but we actually live like we don't believe he exists. He says that these people are ungodly.

He also says something else. He helps us understand they're immoral. Listen to what Jude says here in verse four. "Certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago secretly slipped in among you. They're ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality." In other words, what was happening in the early church with the gnostics was this. Because they believed that body bad, spirit good, ... I'm kind of bottom lining this for you. Are you okay with that? You're like, "I didn't want a lecture on gnosticism, Jerry. Thank you for this." Body bad, spirit good. They were like, "Yeah. It's no big deal. We can just do whatever we want." Then they would do

this. They would mix that with the truth of the gospel of grace. "Hey man. We're all about grace here. This is about grace. We can just do whatever we want. There's plenty of grace for us."

You know, Paul had to contend with that in certain places as well, just as Jude was having to contend with it. Paul actually says there's some people that would say, "Hey, since grace abounds where sin is, let's sin more so that grace will abound more." He said, "Heaven forbid.", because a right understanding of what God has done in Jesus Christ and the grace he's bestowed upon us will call us and empower us to live lives of holiness and lives of morality and lives of purity, not lives of immorality. You see, that's what happens because bad thinking, bad teaching, bad belief, leads to wrong living. That's why you have those who kind of slide in the side door.

I'll just use an example. This could go either way, by the way. They slide in the side door. Some guy who's looking for some girl. They slide in the side door of the church. He comes, hangs out, goes with her to church for awhile, but he wants something. He wants something. Then when that's kind of pushed aside, ... I've actually heard somebody say this in my ministry tenure, doesn't matter where it was. I've actually heard somebody say this. "What seems to be the problem?" His answer is this. "She just takes all this stuff so seriously. I just want to have sex with her and do all that stuff." Of course, without commitment, by the way. "I want to do what guys and girls and boyfriends and girlfriends do. But she seems so serious about this stuff." Maybe, Bucky, it's because she actually believes the gospel, that Jesus Christ came and was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, went to a cross to die for her sin, resurrected from the dead, ascended to the Father and is going to return in judgment, where people are going to stand before him. Maybe she actually believes that that can transform relationships and transform the world. Maybe we need more like her.

That's what we need, because a right understanding of the gospel of grace will call us to lives of morality, call us to lives of holiness, and empower us, by God's Spirit, to do that very thing. You see, for some of us, we've got to get to a place of asking do we really believe the deposit of truth that has been given to us, because it is a once for all deposit about a once for all sacrifice of the Son of God on our behalf. We've got to ask ourselves those questions. It can lead us to wrong places.

Let me give you a last thing. Disobedient. The disobedient. To the Lord, because this is what it says. Look what it says in Jude four. "Certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you and 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." When you see that word deny, it doesn't mean don't believe in, as in, "I don't believe he existed." That's not what it's talking about. The word deny in the Greek language that Jude is choosing right here, means this. Listen to this. To reject the authority of. To reject the authority. Do you notice what he said about Jesus? Jesus Christ our Sovereign and Lord.

Ladies and gentlemen, it becomes very difficult for me when I sometimes run into people who can say the right things, who know the language, but who look nothing like Jesus. Nothing. They simply won't obey him. I've actually met with people where we've opened the Word of God and we've talked. They've said, "Here's my issue and I want to talk to you, Pastor." We've opened the Word of God, and it's clear. It's not even like a debatable matter. It's not like something that's confusing. I'm not sure. I don't know. It's kind of a matter of Christian liberty. No. No. No. It's here. I've got black words on white paper. I've got red words on white paper. Here it is. This is what he said. This is what he said. Then they'll just be like, "Yeah. You know." I'm like, "Hang on a second. I just want to make sure we're clear. You believe this is what Jesus said?" "Yep." "You're just not going to do it." "Yes." "Okay."

Then they give me this. "When can we meet again?" "Never. Here's why. Because I'm going to tell you the same thing I just told you. We're going to open to the same passage. You're going to be confronted with the same Sovereign Lord, and either you're going to obey him and walk in truth, or you're going to continue to convince yourself that your sin is better than the Savior. That's what you get. Those are your options. I'm telling you, the reason I'm pushing on you is because sin is no good for you. It's not how you're supposed to flourish. It's not how God's designed you, and it's no good for the testimony of Jesus in the world. I'm saying this because I love you, not because I'm mad at you, but we're not meeting again if you want me just to affirm your sin or to sit with you so I can just go, 'Yeah, man. That's awesome.' You feel good because you got to talk to a pastor about it. How about you talk to Jesus, the Sovereign and Lord, and surrender your life in obedience to him? That's what we've been called to do."

I know I'm talking loud. I'm just excited. I'm passionate. I'm fired up. Here's why. Jude, when you read him rightly, in the beginning of this, you hear his emotion and you hear his urgency. Sometimes preaching the Word is not only making sure you get the truth right of the text. It's also getting the spirit right of the text. He's doing both of those things in here, although I don't know if he would have yelled like I'm doing. You see, folks, what I'm trying to say is this. Your faith and the faith, they are worth fighting for. I'm curious as to whether or not our lives would actually testify to what we say we believe.

For instance, would your family testify to the reality of your belief in Jesus as the Son of God? Would your friends testify to that? Would your calendar testify to that? Would your bank account testify to that? Would your social media platform testify to that? Would your internet use testify to that? You see, this isn't about like we start compartmentalizing our lives. This isn't about compartmentalizing our lives and saying, "Hey, this is what I do. Then I give Jesus like a heads up, a nod, a tip." That's not it. Some of us are like, "Yeah. You know, I'm trying to put Jesus first."

How about this? How about you make Jesus all? How about that? You see, sometimes we're too busy thinking in categories, like I want to make him first, and this is what I'm going to make second. How about this? How about Jesus is

Lord of all? How about that? Period. That's what he is. He's Lord of all. He's Sovereign Lord. Period. It's all his. Everything I am, everything I have, every decision I make, it all is surrendered to the lordship of Jesus Christ. He can do with me whatever he wants because I was bought with a price, by the precious blood of the Son of God, and I am not my own. I am, just like Jude, a servant of Jesus Messiah. That's what I am. Remember, every time you see Jesus Christ in the New Testament, it's the Jewish way of saying in a Greek way, Jesus Messiah. I am a servant of the Messiah Jesus, and he has right to do with me whatever he wants to do.

See here's the problem, though. Some of us are fighting for all the wrong things. Jude says I want you to fight for your faith and for the faith. Those are worth fighting for. I'm not talking about being mean and being ugly and doing all that stuff. I'm not talking about going out with signs and bull horns and blowing people up and doing all that. That's not what I'm talking about. Getting on their social media page. "You pagan." That's not what I'm talking about. Leave that weirdness out. That's not what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about different things than that. We're too busy fighting for other stuff. We're trying to fight for all the wrong things. We're fighting for power. We're fighting for money. We're fighting for prestige. We're fighting to win a political argument. We're fighting for self promotion. Name it, right? We're fighting to be affirmed by the world. We're fighting for all the wrong things. Jude says how about fighting off the lies of the enemy so that you can unmask the lie and know the truth? This deposit that's been given to you, that you have been entrusted with. How about fighting for your friends that are walking into deceptive philosophies? How about fighting for your kids that are being bombarded with a narrative of the world that is teaching them everything in opposition to the gospel? How about those things?

Our faith and the faith. Those are worth fighting for. Let's bow our heads together. You've been so kind to be patient with me and in this moment I would simply ask this. If you're here and you know Jesus, maybe the Lord spoke to you. Maybe he challenged you at some points in your own life to say you actually believe the truth that you say you believe. Maybe you're a young man or a young woman. You're high school, college, maybe young adult. Have you gotten to the place, listen, have you gotten to the place where you own your own faith? You're not living off of somebody else's anymore. It's yours and you're going to stand with what's been entrusted to you from the Lord Jesus to the apostles to the faithful ones who've given their lives through two millennia, to stand for the truth of what Jesus, who he is, what he's done, and be willing to submit your life to that.

For some of us, we have to ask the question does the truth of our faith come through in our homes? Does it come through in our work relationships? Does it come through in our friendships, or do we just kind of bow out and take a back seat and kind of hope nobody unmasks us as one of those Jesus people? Wow. Do you really believe?

For those of you here who maybe have never come to a place where you've turned from your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ, know this. He was born of a virgin. He lived sinlessly. He died sinless on a cross by bearing the sinfulness of us. But he rose from the dead, conquering sin and death and the grave on our behalf. He ascended to the Father, and through faith in him we can be transformed and we can also know that he is going to return and he's going to make all things new. If you've never surrendered your life to him, I would encourage you, when we dismiss in just a moment, to come straight over to the Fireside Room. We've got some pastors and some prayer partners in there who would love to talk to you about what it means to know Jesus.

Maybe, as a believer, you know there's some things you need to pray about. I would encourage you to go by there as well. Take opportunity to take those before the Lord.

Father, thank you for the ways in which you speak to us. Thank you for the ways in which your Spirit speaks to your people. We've been entrusted with something so precious, the truths that you have deposited for us that are about who you are and about the good news of reconciliation to God through Jesus the Son by the power of the Spirit. May we realize that there are too many times when we're fighting for all the wrong things, instead of trying to fight off all of the lies and all of the attacks and all of the temptations of the enemy, so that we can see the truth of who you are and live as people of freedom and life and blessing in the world. Lord, may we remember to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to all of God's holy people. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.