

Jude 1-4 "Fight for the True Faith in the Church"

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

If you're standing, please bow your heads in prayer. Father, we're about to look at a text which causes worry for people outside the faith when they hear it and causes some worry, different types of worries for those of us who are within the church, within, not within the church, Father. You know it's not about the institution. Father, for those outside of faith and trust in Jesus and for those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus. So we ask, Father, that these words of you and company with the work of your Holy Spirit will help us and inflame within us an enchantment and a treasuring with who Jesus is and what he has done for us and what he is doing in us who are his and what he will do for us who is his. Father, create within us a treasuring of that, an enchantment with that, and within that context, Father, help us to be willing, make us willing to fight for the faith, the faith in Christ. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So I've been working on, you know, I have to set my timer. I've been part of teams, committees. I've been part of that for a long time. I was in, just shortly after I became a Christian in grade 12. I started a Christian club in my high school. I've always had a bit of an entrepreneurial aspect to me. And you can't do things like that without working with other people. And I've obviously have lots of things, which I'm sure if I went back to some of the things I did in grade 12, if God was to show up and play a little video of it, some of it to me right now, I would be so red and so embarrassed at some of the stupid things that I did and some of the things I should have done, but I didn't. But over time, I've, you know, really, I've tried to learn a little bit about how to work very well with others in a team, both where I'm the leader of the team and also when I'm just part of the team and have to support the leader and support the other people. And that's just always a learning curve for those of you who have to have to do that a lot. And one of the things which has developed in my life over the years is that I'm often one of the people in that team that points out that there's an elephant in the room. Some of you who've had to work in churches or whatever, people can spend a long time talking and never acknowledge that there's a huge, big elephant pooping and snorting in the room and banging things around, and we all try to talk around it as if it's not there. And I've just, I mean, I'm not always the only one who does it, but I'm often the guy who says, whoa, whoa, whoa, just time out. There's an elephant here, like, you know, messing things up, maybe we should talk about it. And, you know, we Canadians are often passive aggressive and don't like talking directly about things, and sometimes people find that very threatening and off-putting.

But I think we all agree that if there's a huge elephant in the room, we've got to talk about it. It's hard for me to describe entirely how sobering the book of Jude is, which is what we're going to be studying over five weeks. We'll have a couple of weeks off. It'll take us more than five weeks to go through it, but there's going to be five sermons on the book of Jude, and I encourage you to read it. It's only 25 verses. But, I mean, just amongst other things, it's going to talk about such pleasant topics which Canadians are enthralled with, like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

[4 : 46] And the reality of hell. All, like, really, really, really popular topics for the average Canadian. Something that says, oh, wow, Sodom and Gomorrah, that's your view? I want to become a Christian. And so sometimes, because we Christians know that these aren't things that, you know, Canadians tend to like, we want to downplay it. But that's for subsequent sermons. But what I'd like to do is I'd like to look at the end of the text, which I'm going to preach on today, which is just the first four verses of Jude. So if you could turn in your Bibles to Jude, and there's only one chapter, it's just 25 verses. If you have a hard time finding it in your Bible, it's actually really easy. Go to the very end of your Bible for the book of Revelation, and then go to the tiny little book just before it. That's Jude. It's 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, Revelation. And we're going to be looking at the first four verses. But what we're going to do is we're going to start with sort of the elephant in the room. And then I'm going to go back, before we look more at the elephant in the room, we need to go back to verses 1 and 2, and why they're so important to understand what's going on. So if you could put up verses 3 and 4 first, Claire, that would be very helpful.

And here's how verse 3 and 4 goes. And I'm not going to really talk about it very much, just point out why it's a bit of an uncomfortable and awkward text, a sobering text. It's a sobering text, but important. And I, you know, before I go anything further, I try to use language that will help people want to stay along and track along with it, and not just tune out or dismiss me. And I, as I've been reading this book of Jude and trying to figure out how to break it up and how to preach on it, you know, I've said to my wife, on one hand, it's very, very, very, it's a very, very, very sobering text, but I'm also so glad that I've been reading it and studying it. Like, I'm really, really glad that I've been reading it and studying it. Like, it's something I really needed. And I hope you'll come to understand how you really need to hear this part of God's Word as well. So, verses 3 and 4. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. And just sort of pause there. Contend means compete or fight. It's a word that's both used if you were to be going for the Olympics and you want to win the gold medal. It's also a word that would be used if Russia has invaded Ukraine, and the Ukrainian people say we need to contend, fight for Ukraine. We need to rise up and fight.

And that's the word which is there. And as you can see right off the bat, there's a couple of things that would make a few people raise their eyebrows, especially for some of our friends who might be watching or even here who haven't quite figured out what the Christian faith is. You're not maybe sure whether you'd like to become a Christian or maybe you're looking for reasons not to become a Christian. And now after I've read this verse in the next one, you go, oh, there's some good reasons not to become a Christian. I mean, I hope that's not what your conclusion is. But that sets off some alarm bells. First of all, that there's just this faith that's been once for all delivered.

Like I was just talking with a young woman this week, and she was talking to me about how important it is for her to ask questions. And she'd had a very bad experience with a different church that they didn't want her to ask questions. And I said, well, it's really too bad you had that experience, because actually asking questions is a Christian virtue. I said, I can't remember what the number is, but I think in the Gospels, Jesus asked like something like 286 questions. Like he's asking questions all the time. He wants us to ask questions and think about good questions. So it's too bad.

[8 : 45] But so somebody, I could just imagine her if she was watching this, because I've given her my card, and she says, George, I thought you said that you're allowed to ask questions, but here it says that there's a once for all. Like if there's once for all, how can you ask questions? And what is this about fighting for the faith? And then verse four, for certain people have crept in unnoticed, and actually another way to translate the word crept in is weaseled their way in. Weaseled their way in.

And unnoticed, who long ago were designated for condemnation. Some of you go, what? What? And then it says ungodly people, and some of you go, what? Who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ. So, you know, in some ways, I, you know, I have a title for this series, and I almost feel like I have to rename the series.

I think what, you know, if there's going to be one big idea this week and every week, I think the one big idea is this, that Jude wants you to sow treasure and be enchanted with the person and work of Christ, that you are willing to fight for the faith. So, why do I say that? Well, let's, let's look back at verses one and two. And it's in light of verse three and four that you can start to see a little bit about, maybe, hopefully, about why verses one and two are so important and why they're verses one and

two in the beginning. Complete aside, sorry, just a random thing. I, this summer, I read a fantastic book on the book of Job. Just fantastic book. And, you know, if you've ever read the book of Job, it's really hard to figure out all these counselors and what they're saying and what they're not saying. But one of the things which was so helpful in the book is just to, just to remember how the book begins and ends. The book of Job begins with God allowing Satan to do these things. And at the end of the book, God's going to commend Job. So, that means all the other arguments, all these, all these counselors who are talking about Jude and his, Job and his experience, they've got it all wrong. Because that's actually, we all should remember as we're reading through the book, not get caught up with the arguments, but just to realize, no, no, when they're saying all these things, they've got it all wrong. And at the end of the book, God condemns the, these counselors in the book of Job. And it was a very, very good, you can ask me later about what the name of the book is. But, but here's the thing. All the way through this book, you need to remember how it begins. Like every time, even though we're going to talk about very, very difficult things in upcoming weeks, like Sodom and Gomorrah, and hell, and, and, and, and how demons became demons. Very, very uncomfortable topics. But you need to remember how, how the book begins. And here's how it begins. Jude, oh, and I'm going to comment here. You know, literally what his name is, is Judas.

But what seems to have happened very early on in Christians, Judas was a very, very common name in the time of Jesus amongst Jewish men. And so it looks as if what happened very shortly after the Judas Iscariot is that Christian, Jewish men who become Christians go by their nickname, Jude, rather than their full name, Judas. Otherwise, we'd be reading a book called The Letter of Judas, and people would be saying, what? The Letter of Judas? Whereas if it's The Letter of Jude, we go, okay, like that's interesting. Anyway, sorry. And I thought, sometimes I just want to share cool facts. I don't know.

[12:17] Like, it just makes it sort of interesting. Maybe if you go to a Christian trivia night, you'll, you'll win that question sometime down in the future, and you'll thank me. Anyway, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ. Some of your Bible's translations will say a slave. I'm going to come back to that in a moment, because Jude, Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James. You know, once again, that's going to sell. Boy, if you want to make lots of people want to become Christians, just say, listen, you becoming a Christian means becoming a slave of Jesus. That sells in Canada. People love ideas like, I'm just joking, right? Hopefully you're smiling. And that's how it begins. Well, why is that a good thing? Well, I'm going to tell you why it's a good thing. Jude, a servant or a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James. I'll explain in a moment what it means. To those who are called, beloved in God, the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ. May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you, or another way to understand it is lavished to you, upon you, or be something multiplied. They're both really good images. So what's going on here? And why on earth would you want to actually be a servant of Jesus? Well, the first thing about this, by the way, which is very interesting, is that when he says he's the brother of James, what he's indirectly saying is that he's Jesus's half-brother. Jesus would have been his older brother, but he would have seen Jesus throughout his whole teenage years and his 20s and working with his dad. And, you know, it'd be really hard for one of us. We probably wouldn't want to say, you know, by the way, I'm Jesus's brother.

And, you know, that would get you a lot of beer bought. Tell me about what he was like as a teenager, you know, what was he like as a worker? And that's, but that's not how he leads. He doesn't lead on that. He leads on the fact that he's the slave of Jesus. But he also is, in fact, the half-brother, just as James is of Jude. And he's writing the letter to those who are called, those who are beloved in God the Father, and those who are kept for Jesus Christ.

Now, these three very things with the word servant are unbelievably precious. They're things that we should treasure. Because, you see, it's helping us to understand something about the gospel and something about who Jesus is and how salvation works. And it's helping us to understand, it's helping us to understand something about our fundamental identity.

You see, what the gospel is, what the good news is, the good news is this profound message that Jesus came, that God, the Son of God, left heaven and all of its splendors and remaining fully God, but emptying himself of all of his appearance of God, he took into himself our human nature, and he came and entered human history. It would be a little bit, in some vague, vague, vague way, as if an author writes himself into the book. He's both on one hand still the author of the book, but he's now

in the actual pages of the book. Or, you know, it's like Alfred Hitchcock showing up in his own movie. It's like Lee Child showing up in the Jack Reacher movies. It's like Stan Lee showing up in the Marvel movies. It's, he writes himself into the story. And he writes himself into the story, not just to show how clever he is, or not just so we can go, like, you know, with those old Marvel movies, you try to make sure you notice when Stan Lee appears, or something like that. It's, he comes to make us right with God, because we can't make ourselves right with God. He comes and teaches and performs miracles and, and gives indications that he's not just an ordinary person, that he does things that only God could do. But at the same time, he suffers temptations, like we saw in the wilderness, temptations to act like God, to deal with certain types of things, to show off, or just anything. He resists all of those temptations, not just the ones that are listed there in the book. Matthew, he resists all of them. And, and he never sins. He never acts in rebellion against God. He never does something where he tries to put himself up so that, that, that he's the, he's the absolute center. And, and all, he, he, he suffers all of the temptations that we do, and all of the stresses and anxieties that we do, but he does it without sinning. And, and he, he, in a sense, not in a sense, in a very, very real sense, he lives the life that we should lead. If we want to not only just live our life in this, on this earth, but then when we die, just go right into the new heaven and the new earth, because we've lived a perfect life. And none of us have done that. None of us can do that. We've already failed. And even if

God said, okay, well, from this moment on, I'm just, I'm going to forget, George, everything, all the things that you've done in your life, and just from this moment on, I'll just count that, and I still wouldn't be able to do it. I, I still mess up. I, I have, I, I get envious. I, I, I can have moments of, of, of greed, or of, of anger, or, you know, of pride, and, and I, and, and, and, and, and I can't, I can't do it. And so Jesus lives the life that we should live, but we can't. And then he dies on the cross, bearing the punishment and the sins that, the punishment that I deserve for the sins that I have done.

[17:47] And if I was to do that, it would, it would just mean that I was completely and utterly unmade. And, and God, out of love for us, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, out of love for us, Jesus does that. And he does it for you and for me. And then the invitation is this, the invitation is this, that George, just realize that you, you can't, you, you can't fit yourself for the new heaven and the new earth. Like, you can't do that, George. Like, like, stop trying to do that and pretending that you're doing that. And just like, George, just surrender and turn to Jesus and, and just say, I need you. And I, I can't really understand everything you've done for me and, but I, I need you. I know that only you can make me right with God. Would you take me as your own?

And, and, and the, the Bible teaches that, um, like that really is for everybody. It's for the person who throughout all of their life, they've been overlooked. It's for a person, the person right now who is maybe struggling with a very, very profound betrayal of a loved one, maybe someone like a husband or a wife or your children or your boss or your best friend. And, and you feel completely and utterly betrayed and you couldn't get you fit for people who have been canceled.

It's also for people who are successful and to realize that your success means nothing to God. It's for people who feel full of themselves. It's for every single person. And if you call out to God, call out to Jesus, he will accept you. And this profound mystery happens whereby God comes in, God comes in. It's not just that you have a, you might not have any emotional experience whatsoever. You really might not. Uh, and, and, and, and, but, but God comes in, the Holy Spirit comes in and, and he changes you so that you're, you're, you're, if you could have a spiritual x-ray, your spiritual soul has been changed. And, and Jesus begins to make his home in you and the Holy Spirit begins to make his home in you. And, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and, and you've been, you've been changed and it's all done because of God's surpassing grace. And grace means God's love, his mercy, his kindness, but not just his affections, but they, from God, they have a power to transform you. And you receive it purely and utterly by asking, by trusting him, not by trusting anything that you do or can do. Now, how does this fit in with this? Well, you see, this is describing the identity of a Christian. It's helping you to understand, if you look at verse one again, to those who are called, you see, what this is saying, it's so profound. What it's saying is that from the moment I was conceived in my mother's womb, there was a whisper, and the whisper was from God the Father, and it was, George, I want you to be mine. And when I was born, George, I want you to be mine.

[20:59] When I was one and two and ten and fifteen and sixteen, George, I want you to be mine. I'm calling you. And then in grade 12, I heard the call.

Not because I'm such a good listener, but because God finally made sure that I heard the call, and I responded and said, yes, I'd like to give my life to Christ. I mean, that's just a wonderful thing. If you were here as a Christian, God began calling you to himself when you were conceived in your mother's womb.

That's what this text is saying. Now, this isn't to make you proud. This is to profoundly humble you. Oh, you mean it's not because I was such a profound seeker?

It's not because I had such a profound imagination? It's not? No, no, no. It had nothing to do with that. God was calling you. That's what it's reminding you of. I'm called by God to be his through Jesus. That's who I am.

Isn't that a wonderful thing to be reminded of? Especially if you're going through a very hard time right now. Or if you're outside the Christian faith, and I can just tell you right now, maybe you're saying, well, George, God would never call me.

[22 : 16] Or, you know, do you know how bad I am? Do you know how indifferent I am? Do you know how greedy I am? Do you know how filled with lust I am? Do you know how power hungry I am? He could never be calling me. If you even ask me that question, I'm going to tell you that shows you that God is calling you.

Like, that's what it means. And he will. He knows, yeah, yeah, yeah, actually, he knows better than you how bad you are. He knows better than me how bad I am. But he doesn't weigh my merits. He pardons my offenses.

And then the second thing is, after you understand that I'm called by God, God. I'm beloved in God the Father. And another way to understand that is that I'm enwrapped in God's love.

Now, this is a profound truth. I mean, and maybe if this is all you get from this this morning or any Sunday, that's a wonderful thing. Some of you might hear today might be feeling very anxious. Some of us might be feeling very depressed. Some of us might be feeling very discouraged. Some of us might be feeling very ashamed of some of the things that we've done this week. And some of us might be feeling very ashamed because we've been, we've had a, you know, a child or a parent or a friend tell us of some horrible words that we did or said to them years ago. And it's still haunting them and making them upset.

[23 : 37] And there's nothing we can do to go back in time to undo that. And we might be thinking all of these things. But I want to tell you, brothers and sisters in Christ, that if you're in Christ right now, you are enwrapped in the love of God the Father.

And I have no authority. This isn't just happy, clappy humanism. This isn't just, you know, you looking in the mirror and saying, you know, you're a god, you're a goddess. And you try to convince yourself, no, I am not talking about anything like that.

This is, that's the truth of the gospel, that when you put your faith and trust in Christ, you live the rest of your life enwrapped in the love of the Father. That's you right now.

And let me tell you, that doesn't mean you're going to instantly stop being depressed or stop being discouraged or stop feeling ashamed. But it's a way easier to walk towards those things and deal with them if you know that right now, if you are in Christ, you are enwrapped in the love of the Father.

That's what this text is saying, friends. And it's telling us something else in Christ. It's telling us that we are kept for Jesus Christ.

[24 : 45] And that just sounds, well, no, no, no, just, we need to camp on that image for a moment. We need to meditate upon that image for a moment. Because what it's telling us is this. I mean, I wasn't smart enough and clever enough to seek God.

No, God called me first. And I'm not, I don't have the ability to always feel up. And the fact of the matter is, if I always felt up, there's something wrong with me. Because, you know, my wife would say, George, sometimes you should feel guilty.

That's a good thing to feel guilty sometimes. And yet, you should be ashamed of that. That's a, don't just say, oh, I'm, you know. No, but you approach these things understanding who Jesus is and what he did for you on the cross.

And that you're enwrapped in the Father's love. And you're kept. And it says, some of your translations will say kept for Jesus. And some of them will say kept by Jesus. And they're both true. Jesus keeps me.

My willpower is not very good. Sometimes I turn my willpower to terrible things. Sometimes, you know, I start to have a sense of forgiveness about another person.

[25 : 56] And I say, no, no, no, no. I don't want to forgive them. I want to keep resenting. I want to keep resenting. I want to keep being bitter. You know, we push off that freedom.

And say, no, no, I'd like to be enslaved to feeling bitter. You know. I love telling you this story. You know, when you don't, when you, one of the reasons we need to forgive is if we don't forgive, then what happens is we're filled with bitterness.

Being filled with bitterness is every day having a whole box of ex-lax, hoping that the other person gets diarrhea. And it never works. They just go on in their life.

You've got the runs, right? And so sometimes we feel like we're about to be able to forgive and we want to hold. No, no. But here's the truth. I'm kept by Jesus. You know, that old Irish blessing, and may God hold you in the hollow of his hand, that's where this, that would be an exegesis of this text. I am kept in Jesus's hands. And I am kept in Jesus's hands. And I will be kept in Jesus's hands every day until Jesus's hands deliver me.

[27 : 02] That would be my death unless Jesus comes first. Until I am delivered into the new heaven and the new earth. And then when I am delivered into the new heaven and the new earth, I will understand this profound mystery only then, that I'm not only been kept in the hands of Jesus and brought and just released the way, you know, you might release like a wounded bird that's now gotten better, and you let the bird go into the nest or something like that.

But I've also been transformed by his hands and by his presence and by being enwrapped in his love and by his grace. And I've been transformed so that I can be fit for heaven.

Brothers and sisters, if you're in Christ, that's the gospel. That's your identity. Now, here's the thing. If you have someone who so loves you that he left heaven's splendors and majesty to take on human nature and even spend time in the womb of Mary.

And he loved you so much to come and walk among this earth. And he loved you so much to die for you. And he loved you so much that he rose from the dead. And he loved you so much that he said, if you put your faith and trust in me, I will always be with you.

But first of all, I will make you the Father's child. And he's been calling for you. And you will be wrapped in the Father's love. And you will be kept by me and for me into all of eternity. And that is who I am.

[28 : 29] And who better to be a servant of than him? Who better to be a slave of than him? Who better?

You know, throughout the years, I've had people in churches and, you know, people of some means. And some of you know that some of the huge stock market crashes that have happened over the last 20 years.

And people sitting here in the congregation, absolutely depressed, because in a couple of weeks, they've lost hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars. And let me tell you, friends, you serve money, you will be anxious, and it will let you down.

If nothing else, the second after you die, you're just as rich as the poorest person on the planet. That's all you have left.

You can't be poorer than dead. And you serve all sorts of other things. You make all sorts of other things your gods, and they'll only let you down.

[29 : 31] But why not belong to Jesus? Because, you see, the problem with servant and slave is servant is a bit, makes it too much like we're just an employee. And slave is the slave trade.

And the ancient Roman world had this in-between term. But in the in-between term, neither what we think of as the horrors of chattel slavery, and neither is it like just being an employee.

It's this in-between thing. But the heart of this in-between thing is that you now belong to someone else. And God, by his grace, as you put your faith in Jesus, you belong now to Jesus.

And he will keep you until you come face-to-face with the triune God. And you will always be wrapped in the love of the Father. So let's look at verse 3.

Remember, maybe you don't remember, but what I tried to say, and we're going to see it if you look at the beginning and the end of the letter, and the other stuff is part of the sandwich. Like, if this is actually just true, if what I've said to you is true, like if it's real, if it's real the way that this water bottle is real, if it's not just ideas, it's not like Santa Claus stories, it's not like just watching something very moving in a movie, but if it's actually real, if there really is a God that does exist, if it really is the triune God, then that obviously means we're separate from that God.

[31 : 08] It can't mean anything else. And if there really is this triune God that does exist, that's made himself known through clues, and through revelation, and through promptings, and movings of the Holy Spirit in your lives, and you've come to know him through Jesus, if that's true, if that's absolutely true, well then listen to verse 3 and 4.

Behold, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation. See, that's the wonderful thing about this. What I've just described to you, it's the message that we bring to people in China, it's the message we bring to people in Iran, it's the message we bring to people in Nigeria, it's the message we bring to the LGBTQ plus community, it's the message we bring to those who are high up in the liberal party, and the conservative party, it's the message we bring to those who live in Rockcliffe, it's the message we bring to those who live in the poorest parts of the city, it's just one message, and when you put your faith and trust in Christ, It's a common salvation, equally given and offered to all.

Beloved, verse 3, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend, to fight for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

And I'll talk about this more in some other weeks, but you want to know what that once for all delivered is. If you think about an acorn, and there's this biological continuity between an acorn and the full oak tree, and that's what's happened.

It's like the oak tree's been given to the early church in the form of the first apostles and then the New Testament, and it grows over time, but it's the same oak tree. And over time, it becomes more luxurious and luscious, but it's always the exact same oak tree, so to speak, that was given.

[32 : 58] And so there's this once for all, there's a faith that's given. It's not invented. It's not created by us. It's discovered as we enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ and listen to his word in the context of things that are going on in the world.

And it's just a once for all faith. And then verse 4, For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation.

It means they're going to be judged. Ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. Well, what's this talking about?

Well, you see, the whole thing about it is if Jesus isn't Lord, nothing in our salvation could have happened. If Jesus isn't Lord, then he might not have been able to live a sinful life, sinless life.

If Jesus isn't Lord, he wouldn't have risen from the dead. If Jesus isn't Lord, he couldn't have called you from the moment of your conception. If Jesus isn't Lord, he can't actually be your Savior. If Jesus isn't Lord and Master, he can't say to you that the love of the Father is always going to unwrap you.

[34 : 06] If Jesus isn't Master and Lord, then he can't say that he's going to keep you forever and bring you into heaven. He can't say those things. He has to be Master and Lord, or those other things all fall away.

They all fall away. They can't continue to be. And so if you have people going around, and that's what the next weeks are going to look at, that there's these people who go around, and they might be a bishop.

They might be a doctor of theology and have four PhDs. They might be a megachurch pastor. They might be somebody in your small group. It might be a whole denomination. But in their teaching, they're going to always have these two qualities.

They're going to always try to turn grace into something other than grace that ends up just being an excuse for you to do whatever you bloody well want. Because that's what sensuality is.

It's all about seeking your own pleasure first and foremost beyond all things. And if somebody gets captured into that, that's where cruelty comes from. That's where abuse of others come from.

[35 : 06] It's exalting yourself in your own pleasure. And there's a way of talking about grace, and it might seem very subtle, but it will just lead to that. And when you come across it, this message of Jude isn't about how we have to confront the Trudeau liberals, or how we have to confront the Jordan Peterson conservatives, or how we have to confront the LGBTQ plus community, or how we have to confront those people who believe in scientism.

It's not about confronting people outside the church. It's talking about people within the visible church who have these teachings which they look like sheep, but they're not sheep.

They're actually wolves. And they're introducing things that are going to attack two things. They're either going to attack the gospel and grace, so that, you know, they might use these Christian words, but it's not actually going to lead you to...

It's not going to lead you to Jesus. It's going to take you away from Him. It means you could never hear about Him as your Savior and Lord. And it's going to be subtle things that deny that Jesus is Master.

It's going to have all that little aspect to it that's so subtle and captures so many people and can even capture us at times, when behind it is this denying of Jesus is Master and Lord, is the words of the serpent in Genesis 3.

[36 : 25] Did God really say? Did God really say? Ha, ha, ha. Did He really say? Yeah, you know, don't get too much on Him as Lord or Him as Master and being able to make those things up, you know.

You're a mature person. You need to look out for number one. Don't get carried away. Don't trust His teaching on sexuality. Don't trust His teaching on power.

Don't trust His teaching on money. Don't trust His teaching on family and child raising. Don't trust His teaching. Did God really say? Does He really know what He's talking about? I think we need to add to His teaching with this other stuff.

I think you need to pick up some Rogerian therapy. I think you need to pick up a little bit of Jordan Peterson. You need to pick up a little bit of woke ideology. You need to pick up these different things because, you know, did God really say?

And is that going to really work? And don't get carried away. That's the danger within the church. That's the danger within the church. And if Jesus is Lord, He knows that we have these problems.

[37 : 32] And so the message of the Gospel is, the message of the book of Jude is, friends, I want you to be so enchanted and so treasure who Jesus is, what He did for you, how He walks for you, how the Holy Spirit is in your life, how you are wrapped in the love of God.

I want you to be so enchanted and treasured with this that when you come upon teaching within the church, which undermines and takes that away, that you fight against it.

You fight against it. And as the book unfolds, that will be made more clear about what it even is going to look like and why it's important. Now, just two things just in closing.

One of the things which is so different about Christianity, and this is like an important thing to take away, and I got this, by the way, if you've never read G.K. Chesterton's The Everlasting Man, no, Orthodoxy, sorry, not The Ever, I mean, you should read both of them, but Orthodoxy, you should read it.

It's a very, very fascinating book, very prophetic. And one of the things that Chesterton says is that people don't understand about Christianity is that it doesn't try to moderate things often, but tries to have you do both to the fullest.

[38 : 55] So it's not that you sort of, like, you know, you do blessings on Christians and fight those who are false, ungodly influence in the church, but you have the two of them sort of balance each other off and moderate.

No, no, no, no, no, no. There's two commands. The first command is there are ungodly influencers in the visible church, and you need to walk towards it, you need to deal with it.

And the rest of it, we'll look at what that, it's going to have that big category of perverting the gospel and denying Jesus as Master and Lord, and it's going to give you a bit of a sense about what that's going to look like when you meet it and how you deal with it.

That's going to be the rest of the book. But you need to do that. But you also have to do something else for brothers and sisters in Christ, which is just as important. You don't sort of just say, well, I'm going to weaken this, you know, I'm going to weaken this and not be so harsh on that, and then there's this other command, and I'll sort of weaken that in light of this, and no, no, no, no, no.

You put this doll up to the top, and you doll this up to the top, and what's the dolling up to the other top? The dolling up to the other top is this, that it's very easy for us to have friction with other Christians. It's very easy for us to have a Christian, a brother and sister in Christ, just rub us the wrong way.

[40 : 03] Now, maybe I'm the only bad Christian in the room, but if you're at all honest, there are people, even in this church, who irritate you a little bit. Maybe more than a little bit, or in another church.

And verse 2 is for us to pray over each other. In fact, if you'd like to stand now, just come to a close, look at verse 2. May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Now, you see, here's the thing which is really important for us. You know, when it comes down to the end of the book of Jude, we're going to see what it means to walk, like, we're going to, you know, the book of Jude is going to sell the problem.

This is a problem. You need to deal with it. Walk for it and deal with it. And these are some very important principles of dealing with it. That's going to come down later on in the book. But while you're dealing with these people who are, that are giving ungodly influence, it's going to pervert the gospel and undermine Jesus' Savior and Lord.

By the way, there's a whole pile of other people and they just struggle and sometimes they're a bit annoying. In fact, frankly, George, you're a little bit annoying at times, more than a little bit annoying. And sometimes there's going to be people who don't really walk with the Christian faith all of the time.

[41 : 10] And I'm not talking about people who just have a hard time being perfect Christians because you know what? Every single one of us should put up our hand that I'm not a perfect Christian. Well, how do we deal with each other who are trying to walk in all of these things?

Well, we need to learn to pray this over each other. Like, the next time you're irritated with somebody in the church, maybe you should just say, okay, I should pray Jude 2 over them. What is Jude 2?

If it's up on the screen, may mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. Like, just imagine if that was, okay, yeah, yeah, I'm not saying you're all going to be perfect, but gosh, that person's so irritating.

Okay, that's actually a message from God that I should say, you know what? Father, I know I can be really irritating. And Father, I pray that mercy, peace, and love be multiplied upon that person. I mean, that would be one of my prayers coming out of this week, that we be a congregation that's learning to pray that over each other all the time. We're learning to pray over our brothers and sisters in Christ.

[42 : 18] Father, may Jesus, may mercy, peace, and love be multiplied and lavished upon that person. Let's pray. Father, we ask that you help us to fall in love with the gospel, with the person of Jesus and his work.

We ask, Father, that as we become more in love and enchanted and treasure it, that we would be willing to deal with serious errors, even if they don't look serious at first, but that they will pervert the gospel and pervert grace and deny the lordship and the saving work of Christ, and that we deal with that, Father, that we learn from Jude how to deal with that, walking towards it, not ignoring it, not saying it doesn't matter.

But, Father, just as we ask for that, we also ask that you give us a very different spirit to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask, Father, that you build within us a habit when we are annoyed or irritated or bothered by our brother and sister in Christ, that we will pray, Father, help us to pray that your mercy, peace, and love be multiplied upon them.

And I ask, Father, right now for this congregation, those present, those online, those downstream, Father, I ask in Jesus' name that your mercy and your peace and your love be multiplied upon each one and upon us as a whole.

And I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.