

A Pastoral Burden

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Jude verses 1 to 25.! Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.

May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. 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.

For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality, and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

And the angels, who did not stay within their own positions of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

[1 : 40] Yet in like manner, these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.

But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, the Lord rebuke you.

But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.

Woe to them, for they have walked in the way of Cain, and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error, and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear.

Shepherds feeding themselves, waterless clouds swept along by winds, fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted. Wild waves of the sea casting up the foam of their own shame.

[2 : 52] Wandering stars for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires. They are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.

But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.

It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

And have mercy on those who doubt. Save others by snatching them out of the fire. To others, show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

[4 : 27] Now to him, who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever.

Amen. Thank you very much, Demetria. This morning we are continuing our sermon series in the letter of Jude.

And although the whole letter was read, this morning we are going to be directing our attention to verses 3 and 4.

And in these two verses, what we find is that Jude gives the reason for writing this letter.

And what we see in his reason is a weighty pastoral burden. What we see Jude sharing as his reason is something that pressed on his heart so strongly that he took a different approach to this letter that he was determined to write.

[5 : 52] But he made a change about what he was going to write about. And this burden that Jude actually displays in these two verses, they're not unique to Jude.

This pastoral burden that Jude displays in these two verses, they are carried by all faithful pastors. And this morning I want us to consider this burden that Jude lays out in these two verses.

But first let's pray. Father, we ask you to do what we just sang that you would speak to us. Speak, O Lord, in the preaching of your word.

Speak to us corporately and speak to us individually. You know what we need to hear. And Lord, would you give us all a sense in our hearts that though we humanly speaking made decisions to be here, you and your providence and sovereignty brought us here.

And so Lord, may you cause us to posture our hearts in this way. And I ask once again, O Lord, that you'd anoint me by your spirit, that you would use me as an instrument in your hand for the good of your people and ultimately, Lord, for the glory of your great name.

[7 : 22] In Christ's name we pray. Amen. So in verses 3 and 4 of this letter of Jude, we find the details of Jude's pastoral burden and what we see is it's a two-fold burden.

We see Jude sharing two connected but separate concerns that prompted him to write this letter. And I want to consider those two concerns in turn in our remaining time.

First, we see that Jude had a concern to guard the faith. In verse 3, Jude begins by telling his recipients that he was not just eager but that he was very eager to write to them about their common salvation.

He says, I was eager to do this. I was eager to write to you about this gracious and glorious salvation that we all share in common. And in these words, Jude reminds us that there are no classes of salvation among God's people.

There's no first class and second class. There's a common salvation which all of God's people share together. And what Jude is referring to is something we see regularly in the New Testament letters.

[9 : 00] We see the writers of the New Testament letters regularly and primarily in many cases focusing their letters on this common salvation.

They are stating the gospel and restating the gospel and reminding their hearers of the content of the gospel and the grace of God that's revealed in the gospel.

They do this again and again and again. And sometimes people would say, well, you know, why do we always keep talking about the gospels? why do we always keep talking about the gospel, the gospel, the gospel?

Well, this is the pattern that we see in Scripture. We see this pattern of the writers of the letters in the New Testament regularly and primarily writing about the gospel.

They did it so we could better understand the gospel. They did it so we could better understand the glorious salvation that has come to us through the gospel.

[10 : 11] And brothers and sisters, I can say this without any fear of contradiction. Whatever degree of understanding of the gospel that any of us has is not complete.

in so many ways we have only begun to understand the mercy and grace of God that has come to us in the gospel.

We have not begun to really scale the heights of it and plumb the depths of it. And so the writers in the New Testament are repeatedly bringing the gospel before us and reminding us and encouraging us and strengthening us in the gospel so we know how to live as we navigate life in this world.

And they do it because even the things we learn we tend to forget. Even the parts of the gospel that we understand we tend to forget and so the gospel writers continue to bring us back and remind us and again and again.

That's what Jude wanted to do. And as encouraging as that would have been Jude finds himself out of necessity making a change.

[11 : 36] He is making a change to do something. He says this is not my preference. This is not my desire. He said I'm doing this because it is necessary to do it.

Look again and how he says it in verse 1. Beloved although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation I found it necessary I found it necessary to write to you appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude says a whole lot in this verse and we will miss it if we don't pause to consider it. Jude expresses his love for the recipients of this letter but by a greater measure Jude is expressing God's love for his people.

This word beloved is a special word for God's people. This is almost akin to that special word that a husband may have for his wife or a wife or a husband or someone who is dear to you that unique word that you attach to them.

This word beloved is this special gospel word that is attached to God's people. We are his beloved and as I've said before if we are beloved by God we'll always be loved by God and that is what he's expressing this care this attachment of affection to God's people.

[13 : 21] They are his beloved people and Jude is God's servant he is the servant of Christ and therefore he has entered into this love for God's people because that is what shepherds are called to do.

They're called as best as they can in their humanity to draw near to the people of God those whom he loves and love them all the same and so Jude is expressing that in his opening reason for this letter.

This description that Jude uses to refer to God's people points to the heart of the gospel. It points to the heart of the gospel because the heart of the gospel is the love of God for sinners like you and me.

those who didn't deserve his love those who ought to have been the objects of wrath and judgment and God set his love upon them and instead gave them mercy and grace.

In this single word Jude points us to the heart of the gospel which is God's love for his redeemed people. and Jude tells them although he was eager to talk to them write to them about the common salvation he instead finds it necessary to write to them appealing to them to contend for the faith and notice what he says that was once for all delivered to the saints.

[15 : 02] Jude is telling them what he had in mind to write about the common salvation and then he is telling them instead what he is about to write about and that is to appeal to them of a pressing need to contend for the faith.

Now to appreciate what Jude is sharing this pastoral burden that he has I think we should try to understand some relationship between this common salvation that Jude wanted to write about and this appeal to contend for the faith this faith that he wanted them instead to contend for we want to see the connection between the two of them the common salvation and what Jude refers to as the faith but let's start in reverse order let's try to understand what does Jude mean about the faith what faith is he calling the church to contend for the faith that he is calling the church to contend for is not saving faith it's not trust in Jesus Christ whereby we whereby we must be saved Jude is not appealing to his heres to contend for that faith

Jude is instead appealing to his heres to contend for the faith and what the faith is the faith is words the faith is objective truth which we can all know the faith is the body of teaching that is the basis for the Christian life and more specifically the faith is the body of teaching that was passed on from the Lord Jesus himself to his apostles and from his apostles to the church the people of God it's a body of doctrines it is what we are to believe and how we are to live in accordance with God's revelation in his written word and his revelation through the word that became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and Jude tells us two important truths about this faith about this faith that he wants us to contend for first he tells us it was once for all delivered and second he tells us it was delivered to the saints and by once for all delivered what Jude means is that this body of truth this body of teaching these doctrines this faith is completed it is closed we have no basis or license to add to it we have no basis or license to take away from it what the faith was in Jude's day is what the faith is in our day it is what the faith will be until the Lord Jesus returns in fact what Jude says is this was delivered the new international version says it was entrusted to the saints and that communicates something that it is something to be preserved it is something that is to be to be considered

precious and this is why Jude would say you need to contend for it you need to fight for it it is worth fighting for it is to be safeguarded it is to be preserved anyone who has been entrusted with anything it is a basic requirement that you have to be faithful with it so Jude says this faith was once for all delivered second he says that it was delivered to the saints and what

Jude communicates by this is he's saying this is a shared responsibility this was not just delivered to the leaders of the church this was delivered to the saints this was entrusted to the saints there is this shared responsibility for the faith this doesn't mean that every single person in the church has the same degree of responsibility to guard the faith it goes without saying the Bible is very clear that the elders those who are charged with the responsibility for caring for God's people they're the ones who have a primary responsibility for guarding the faith but it's not an exclusive responsibility they are called to together the saints are called to guard the faith that has been entrusted to them and I think one of the things that happens often and certainly we can see this in history this has happened because the shared responsibility for the faith to guard the faith to preserve the faith has not been taken seriously in some churches and been allowed to be the responsibility of a few people these churches have drifted they've lost their way and there are too many to point to and too many to count where this has been their experience now at the heart of the faith is our common salvation but

[21 : 10] Jude he makes a distinction in how he lays out his burden in verse 3 a helpful way I think for us to think about our salvation is that it flows from the faith it flows from this body of doctrine this body of teaching that we have received at the heart of the faith is our common salvation and then at the heart of our common salvation is the gospel the good news of God's son who through his living and dying reconciles repentant sinners to a holy God and part of the good news of the gospel is that God not only saves people but he transforms their lives part of the teaching of the body of faith is that those who truly belong to

Christ live lives that reflect that they belong to Christ so that's the connection between our common salvation that Jude was eager to write about and the faith that he instead felt it was necessary to call his hearers to contend for Jude calls his hearers to really join him because this was his concern his concern was for the faith to guard it and he was calling them to join him in this effort and what it means to contend for the faith is not to get into physical fights it's to uphold the faith by challenging those who try to distort the faith and refuting those who oppose the faith whether they're doing it in word or whether they're doing it in deed and to appreciate how

Jude is bringing this and if we think of our own context Jude is not calling us to be contenders for the faith at large Jude is not calling us to go out into the world and try to bring every single church in alignment with what the faith is this is a local church responsibility this is on a local level a duty that those who have who are part of a local church have to together contend for the faith because sometimes we drift sometimes we're not thinking as clearly about the faith as we ought to and together we can contend for the faith Jude is expressing this in a local setting not in an at large kind of way but if all churches do this then Jude's burden is shared among all the churches

Jude's concern as I mentioned last week he didn't indicate the churches he was writing to but he was aware that there were issues that he needed to address in these churches his concern was that they were teaching things and they were living in ways that were contrary to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints and so he reminded the saints of what their duty was to contend for this faith that was delivered to them Jude clearly believed and had confidence that they had received the faith this precious body of teachings these doctrines that were delivered to them through the apostles and that's why he could say to them I want you to contend for it he could appeal to them for that because he had confidence that they had it they received!

it and he obviously had confidence that they would appeal that they would hear his appeal that he was making to them this word for being used in a military context or an athletic context it means to exert oneself it means to take active part in whatever the endeavor is it's not passivity it is being actual and active so I'm going to ask you this morning how do you hear this pastoral burden from Jude where he appeals to the saints to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to them hopefully we're all hearing it on a personal level hopefully we're all identifying with the fact that we are among the saints and therefore we are called to this this is not an option this is not that's not my gift this is a shared responsibility that is laid upon all of us and we need to hear it the wonderful thing about it is it starts in community it starts in community just as we are together this morning as we're hearing

[27 : 05] God's word together it is a collective responsibility that we have as a church and part of our approach to ministry a very intentional approach to ministry is to promote this shared responsibility that we have to God the faith and another way we can talk about God in the faith is God in the faith is a commitment to being sound in our doctrine God in the faith is a commitment to being healthy with handling the word of God and that is what we endeavor to do as the word of God is proclaimed from this pulpit we endeavor to demonstrate the kind of care and the kind of seriousness with which we must handle God's word and whether it is in our prayer times or in

Bible study or in our discipleship groups whether it's through the resources we make available like table talk all of these have one aim and the aim is that we would guard the faith the heart of which is this common salvation that we have the heart of which is this glorious gospel that we have been entrusted with and so brothers and sisters we do this better together it's easy to hear this and to think in a very personal way and we certainly need to think in personal ways but we don't start there we start in a community way and just by being faithful to be a part of the community we will grow in strength in being able to guard the faith we can't guard what we don't understand it is only as we understand the faith that we are able to guard the faith and you know the more we understand the faith and even as we see some of the concerns that the

New Testament writers would raise about some of the issues that were in some churches they give us a concern for ourselves and our need to guard the faith so the first part of Jude's pastoral burden is a concern to guard the faith the second part of his pastoral burden is in verse 4 and it's a concern to guard the flock which is my second and final point Jude's concern to guard the faith in verse 3 is rooted in his concern to guard the flock in verse 4 there's a vital connection between these two concerns because the corrupted faith will lead to a corrupted flock look again at verse 4 where Jude gives us his reason for the change of heart that he had he writes for certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation ungodly people who pervert the grace of our

God into sensuality and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ Jude refers to the people that he is concerned about and he is wanting the church about as certain people doesn't call their names he says certain people have crept in among God's people unnoticed leaders and now when we take Jude's letter as a whole if we are aware of all that he says beyond these introductory words what becomes clear is that Jude is not referring these certain people he's not referring to the ordinary members of the church Jude is referring to outsiders and not just outsiders but outsiders with influence he's talking about leaders this becomes very clear in verse 12 when he refers to them as shepherds feeding themselves these were false shepherds what we find in scripture is that shepherd is a common word that is used in scripture to talk about those who have been entrusted with the care of

God's people and God's people are commonly referred to as a flock and the chief priority of shepherds is to feed the flock to care for the flock to nurture the flock but what we see that Jude points out is that these false shepherds their chief priority was feeding themselves and they were not feeding themselves what they were supposed to be feeding the flock what they were feeding themselves was the material gain that they were getting from fleecing the flock who was among them and Jude makes this very clear in what he is saying he he is addressing them for feeding themselves and this is why he refers in verse 11 to says to them that they have abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to

[33 : 22] Balaam's error Balaam is a non-Israelite old testament figure a prophet non-Israelite who we encounter in the book of numbers and he was one of those prophets for hire you can go to Balaam and you could pay Balaam a certain amount and Balaam would say whatever you wanted him to say in the name of God he would bless he would curse he would do whatever you want him to do in the name of God and Jude says you have gone the way of Balaam you false shepherds who are feeding yourselves instead of feeding the sheep says you've gone the way of Balaam and Jude not only points to their greed but he also points to their sexual immorality these false shepherds were also living sexually immoral lives in verse 4

Jude says they crept in unnoticed they crept in unnoticed and what does he mean by that he clearly can only mean that to the congregation that they came in that these false shepherds came into they were unnoticed they appeared to be other than they really were Jude is not saying they were unnoticed by God as a matter of fact he helps us to see that they were noticed by God he's making that point that God noticed he says these false shepherds they were long ago designated for the

condemnation to the judgment that he is now uttering against them he says this judgment awaited them and we see next Sunday the Lord willing that Jude goes on to state the judgment that awaits them using other examples of the past of how

God judged those who were sinning God knew from the very beginning God knew from eternity past what they were going to do and their judgment was set and their judgment was sure and though it appeared that they had gotten by because they were able to deceive the church Jude says their judgment was long ago designated they were long ago designated for judgment and for condemnation now Jude uses three descriptions to describe these people who had crept in unnoticed among God's people the first description he uses he says they're ungodly people now what does Jude mean exactly what does it mean when he says they are ungodly people I think to understand what

Jude is saying by saying that they are ungodly people we have to appreciate that these people presented themselves as being godly despite the sinful lives that they were living I mean Jude credits the church for knowing enough that if these people had come in just showing themselves in ungodly ways in a vacuum that they would have been detected from the outset but they didn't come that way they came among the church and they actually presented themselves as godly people as a matter of fact when we read the letter we'll see that they were presenting themselves as more godly than everybody else they were showing themselves to even be more powerful than everybody else more spiritual than anybody else they had all the trappings of presenting themselves as being godly and Jude says squarely he says they are ungodly people what does it mean to be ungodly at a very basic level to be ungodly is to live life without reference to god not the way things appear but in reality to live life without reference to god is to live life in a way that's opposite to how god calls us to live life and here's the truth there are only two ways to live the way of the godly or the way of the ungodly the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked the godly belong to god the ungodly do not belong to god the righteous belong to god the wicked do not belong to god and there is no in between we're either living the life of the!

godly or! we're living the life of the ungodly but these were people who were among god's people and they carried themselves in their head and before the church as being godly and Jude says no they are ungodly psalm 1 gives us a very vivid picture of these two ways to live the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked Jude is making the point that there's nothing about them that's godly doesn't matter how they boast!

[39 : 10] Doesn't matter all the power they seem to have! They are ungodly Jude says! Second Jude describes them as perverters of grace still in verse 4 he describes them as those who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality.

The New International Version says it this way they change the grace of our God into license for immorality. This is a reference to them using grace the grace of God revealed in the gospel as a cover for their sin as a cloak for their sin.

The gospel is a gospel of grace. The gospel is a gospel of amazing grace that's filled with amazing promises.

I mean, scripture is filled with promises and reminders of the abounding grace of God to sinners. sinners. The patient grace of God to sinners.

We saw this as we worked through Genesis, how God's grace abounded and abounded and abounded in the midst of sin. We see it when scripture says that God forgives us and he separates our sins from us as far as the east is from the west.

[40 : 45] And we have the promise in scripture that it matters not how much we might fall into sin. And it matters not what the extent of our sin is.

God's grace abounds to us. These are all true of scripture and even more. So, for example, we have in 1 John, the letter of 1 John, chapter 2 verse 1, John writes, my little children, I'm writing these things to you that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. This verse puts the promise of God's provision of grace and forgiveness in perspective.

sin. The goal is that we do not sin. That's the goal. We will sin, but the goal is that we do not sin.

And the promise is that if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, the one who died for all of our sins, our past sins, our present sins, and our future sins.

Jesus has paid it all for all of our sins. And just in case you're wondering about how true that is, and just in case you're thinking that maybe he did not die for future sins, sins not yet committed, the

question then would be, who will then atone for those sins?

[42 : 34] If Jesus did not die for those future sins, who then will atone for them? But he died for them.

And John says, I write to you that you do not sin, but if you do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

And Jesus would be the one pleading our case on our behalf. And essentially to say, Father, I died for those sins. I paid the price for those sins.

And God would not require it of Jesus and then require it of us. So Jesus is our advocate before the Father. But Jude says, these false shepherds were doing something else.

These false shepherds were taking that grace and turning it into a license for sin. That's what license does.

[43 : 41] What license does is it takes the promise of grace of when we sin as a license to go ahead and sin. And then turn around and rely on the promise of grace for forgiveness.

These false shepherds were turning the promise of grace into a license to sin. And what Jude helps us to see is the prominent form of sin that they were practicing was sexual immorality.

And that's what he means when he uses this word sensuality, when he says they were turning the grace of our God into sensuality. That's a word, the original word is commonly used to refer to sexual immorality, but as I said, the New International Version translates it very plainly to say sexual immorality.

And Jude goes on later, we'll consider this next week as we move on, the Lord willing, where in verse 7 he talks about Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities that indulge in sexual immorality and pursued a natural desire.

And then in verse 8 he refers to those who defile the flesh. He's pointing to sexual immorality that these individuals were engaging in.

[45 : 11] Now you'd think, well, how could they be getting away with this? How could they be in the church doing this? Well, the reason they did it was they were twisting God's word to allow for this, to cover for this.

And there's a good reason why the Lord calls his people sheep, because many times some of his people, we fall for it.

We fall for the deception and the distortion and the perversion of the word of God to cover and cloak for open sin.

they were teaching, what does it matter?

God's grace is abounding to us, and therefore they were using God's grace, perverting it into license.

[46 : 17] It's something we commonly call today greasy grace. It's slippery grace. it's the belief that it doesn't matter how we live, it doesn't matter what we do, as long as we profess faith in Christ, we are fine, we are okay.

It's the belief that once I am saved, it doesn't matter how I live, because God's grace abounds to me, and I will be forgiven no matter what.

Greasy grace is the premeditative conscious awareness of an intent to sin and then to rely on God's grace in our sin.

That's what license is. That's what license does. But grace doesn't do that. Biblical grace does not encourage or entice any of us to sin because we believe you'll be forgiven when we sin.

That's not biblical grace. We've been learning about biblical grace a few months ago when we were studying and memorizing together Titus 2, 11-14.

[47 : 36] How many remember just the gist of that verse, those verses? I'm going to ask Lyndon to quote it. I know he knows it. I'm not going to ask him to do that. But I think we generally remember what Titus 2, 11-14 says.

It tells us that God's grace appeared and appeared for a particular reason. That's what it says. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

That's what biblical grace does, brothers and sisters. Biblical grace does not entice us to turn it into license and to sin premeditatively and then rely on the grace.

Brothers and sisters, we are treading on dangerous grounds. If we are mindful that we are going to sin and we are then going to lean back and fall back on the grace of God, brothers and sisters, that's a dangerous place to be in because the grace of God does not teach us to do that.

The grace of God trains us to do otherwise. It trains us to say no to ungodliness and yes to righteousness, no to worldly passions, and yes to affections for God.

[49 : 30] It trains us to live self-controlled and upright lives in this present dark age in which we live. That's why the grace of God has appeared.

God's grace appeared to purify a people for himself. And the idea is something that is his very own. The idea is that we are not to be shared.

The idea is that we become his exclusive possession. He redeemed us. We are his. And therefore we live in fidelity to him.

The good works that Titus says that we are called to, it's more than good deeds, although that certainly is included. The good works is to live lives that are befitting the calling that we have.

Live lives that demonstrate the transformation that God has brought into our lives through the gospel in the midst of a dark and crooked world.

[50 : 43] The third way that Jude describes these people is that they deny our only master. Jude said these ones who crept in unnoticed, they deny our only master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

what was he saying? He wasn't saying that they got up in church and said, I deny Jesus Christ, I deny he's my master, I deny he's my Lord. They were not doing that. If they were doing that, people would have thrown them out.

What Jude was really saying is that either way they live, they deny the lordship of Jesus Christ.

They deny that he is their master. They deny that they belong to him.

Because brothers and sisters, if Jesus Christ is our Lord, if Jesus Christ is our master and we see ourselves as his slave, as his servant, we live that way.

We're not our own. We've been bought for the price. And that is to be reflected in our lives when we are aware of it.

[51 : 54] These people were not living in any way that indicated that they embraced the lordship of Jesus Christ and they saw themselves as his slave.

That's the way Jude introduced himself as he started this letter when he said Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ. He was only doing the biddings of Jesus.

He wasn't on his own personal agenda. He was not on his own mission. He was doing the mission of Jesus. But these ones who had slipped in, they were not living that way.

And Jude was saying they deny the lordship of Jesus Christ. They deny that Jesus is master of his people.

And brothers and sisters, this concern or these concerns that Jude has, they're not in a vacuum. these concerns that Jude has are for the flock.

[53 : 04] He wants the flock to be protected from these false shepherds. This is his concern. And he's making the church aware of it.

It should be our concern as well. Again, the elders of the church have a greater responsibility, a primary and paramount responsibility to guard the flock.

Brothers and sisters, there's a certain degree to which all of us have that responsibility to guard the flock. First in our own living and being aware of the effect that we have upon one another.

The best gift that we can all give to one another is to live a life that's worthy of the calling that we have received in Christ. That is a shared responsibility that we have, a stewardship that we have for one another to do that.

Because we are members of one body. The clear point that Jude is making is that we have to do more than guard the faith, that body of teaching.

[54 : 26] we need to do that. But he also is alerting us to the fact that we must be concerned for the flock as well.

As I brothers and sisters, I believe there's much in these two verses for us to reflect upon. we would do well, for example, to reflect upon these descriptions that Jude gives of these false shepherds who slipped in unnoticed.

They were ungodly. And when we reflect on our lives, there's not a single one of us who is perfect.

perfect. We all fall short of the glory of God to one degree or another. But when you reflect on your life, before the Lord as best you can, is it generally marked by this description that can be said that you are godly?

Not perfect, but that generally godly would be a fitting, a proper, an honest description of your life? Or would it be ungodly?

[55 : 51] When we consider this charge against these false shepherds, that they perverted the grace of God into a license to sin, what would be true of us?

Would it be true that we are amazed by the grace of God, we are grateful for the grace of God, that when we fall, when we sin, we can run to him and receive mercy and grace and full pardon for all of our sins, and we can have a clear conscience before God?

Or is it that we would be more marked by premeditatively sinning because grace is in the background that we think we can fall back on? God's And when we think about this third description, that they denied Jesus Christ, their only master and Lord, the only master and Lord, what would be true of us?

Would it be more true that we live with an awareness that Jesus is Lord of our lives, he is master, and we have to do his bidding as best we can? Again, not perfectly. None of us is a perfect servant of Jesus, a perfect slave of Jesus.

None of us is. But generally, would our lives be marked by this description that Jesus is my Lord, and Jesus is my master, and I seek to serve him and please him?

[57 : 22] And when I fall short, I am grieved in my heart, and I repent, and I say, God, help me to live in a faithful way.

I ask us to reflect on these things, brothers and sisters, because, see, we could read a letter like this, we could read what Jude is saying about these who crept in, and we could just think it's about them and not about us.

Yes, what Jude has in view is sexual immorality, and that may not be true for us, what some other sin might be. And it's all the saying that we have to be concerned.

My prayer for us this morning is that we would hear Jude's appeal, and that we would all respond to it as we do business with the Lord, as we pray.

And I pray the result of it would be that we would all grow in our concern for the faith that we share, and the flock that we are all a part of.

[58 : 42] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your love for us.

We thank you that we are your beloved, and Lord, we pray that we would live as your beloved. We would live in fidelity to the faith that has been entrusted to us.

We would live with care and concern for the flock that we are a part of. God, work in all of our hearts as only you can.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.