

Stay Faithful to the Gospel

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[0 : 0 0] If you can be a sibling of someone famous, who will it be? And how will you live differently? If you're a sport fan, maybe you want to be one of Williams or Watts, or if you enjoy movie and entertainment, how about being one of the Hemsworths, or the White Brothers of Aviation or the Kennedys in American politics.

Let's play a guessing game, okay, to see whether you can recognize those siblings of the foreign peoples. The hints are their siblings is in entertainment industry.

They go, Kimon, very obvious. Got resemblance, this is issues. This is harder. Steve might know this one. We all know this.

The next one should be easy for all the Yanwans. Yeah. Very well.

Great job in working out who these people are. But do you remember my original questions? There are two questions. The first is, whose sibling do you want to become?

[1 : 1 9] And what about the second questions? Wendy, can you hold back a bit on that one? Yes.

I think the second question is comparatively a bit more important. And I won't ask for a show of hands, but I'm confident around half of us, so many of us will forgot that question, is how will you live differently?

Which is about what changes people will see in your life to show that you are a member of a particular family. I'm confident, for I know that I myself often miss important parts of a conversation because I'm very frustrated on some earlier parts or become very quick to react.

One of the writers in the New Testament, James, teach us from his book in chapter 1, verse 19 to 20, that my dear brothers and sisters, take note of this.

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Learning to hold back our reaction, being quick to listen and slow to speak, and or slow to become angry is such a lifelong lesson.

[2 : 4 0] It's much easier to stay angry and demand justice, an eye for an eye. But take note of James' warning that human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires, which is end up causing you to become ungodly.

Ash preached last week about how the gospel, the good news of God's action to save people through Jesus, bring everyone into a family. Talking about family and sibling, we read today that James also has a brother who wrote a letter in the New Testament.

His name is Jew. Jew, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, he wrote a letter to those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ, to encourage them to content for the faith, deliver once and for all to the saints.

My intention today is to explore three questions from Jew's letter. Who is Jew? Who are the ungodly? And how do we stay faithful to the gospel?

We know from what we have read that Jew is James' brother. The beginning of the letter can also be translated as, I, Judas, am a slave to Jesus Christ and brother to James, writing to those loved by God the Father, called and kept safe by Jesus Christ.

[4 : 25] We can make three observations of this different translation. Firstly, Jew and Judas are interchangeable names.

Matthew 13, verse 54 to 55 says, So, apart from being the brother of James, Jude or Judas is also a brother of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3 of Mark's gospel says, Jesus' family went to take charge of him because they thought he has gone out of his mind for being so busy dealing with people and even skipping meals.

But Acts 1, 14 indicates that Jesus' brother later become his follower. And Paul, right in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 5, implied that Jesus' brother become traveling missionary later in their life.

James and Jude's writings provide so much for us to learn about how to live as a follower of Christ. I urge you to set your goal this year to read their writing and be familiar with their teaching.

[5 : 55] The second observation is about the term a slave to Jesus Christ, which is the first lesson we can learn from Jude. Jude did not claim his status as a brother of Jesus Christ, but addressed himself as a slave to Jesus Christ because he was fully committed to glorifying Jesus.

He does not want anything to distract his audience. Being a slave is a much stronger term than being a servant. Jude's self-designation describes his complete devotion to Jesus.

Jude is an ordinary person who became special through his association with Jesus. And the association is not through being his sibling, but through his submission to Jesus as a slave to his master.

Jude is a person who knows his standing with God. His identity comes from his heart to serve and glorify God. It does not come from his status or standing among the believing community or his position in the church.

He wants the best for his audience because he's writing to those loved by God, which is my third observation. The love that Jude referred to is a completed action that continues in the same state.

[7 : 22] God continues to love the people Jude is writing to because they are called and kept safe by Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate carekeeper of all those who follow him.

Jesus is the only person who ensures his followers' abundance in mercy, peace, and love. And Jude is very confident that Jesus continues to keep his followers safe.

Jude loved the followers of Jesus as much as Jesus loved them. And in his letter, he provides bookends of encouragement and praises for the faithful followers.

His letter may seem heavy and sober in the middle, but we must remember that Jude writes it out of love and encouragement.

The faith that was once for all and trusted to God's holy people frames the whole body of the letter. Jude writes to remind and to urge his readers to remember that faith.

[8 : 28] It was once and for all and trusted to them who are God's holy people. It will not change, diminish, or be taken away. Faithful followers knew how to behave and only needed to be reminded of what they had already learned and demonstrated.

Nick reminded us in his preaching a couple of weeks ago from Ephesians that Jesus' followers are God's holy people who have a glorious inheritance waiting for them.

There is such a true hope and an incomparable great power for those who believe. Jesus' believers and followers are special because Jesus calls and keeps us.

Jude told us that he originally intended to write about their common salvation in Jesus Christ, but had to change subject to provide with tools to defend their faith.

His strong warning is necessary because there are ungodly people among his readers. 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 run for all and trusted to God's holy people.

- [9 : 45] For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped among you. They are ungodly people who have preferred the grace of our God into a license of immorality and denied Jesus Christ our only Savior and Lord.

Jude told us that the ungodly people are those who preferred the grace of our God into a license of immorality and denied Jesus Christ our only Savior and Lord.

The critical word here is only. Jesus is our only Savior. Ungodly people have an incorrect understanding of what it takes to be saved and live in a moral life, which if followed will be detrimental.

There's nothing and no one else can save us or keep us safe except Jesus. False teachers create problems, abuse the support of the Holy Ghost church, and claim to have particular inspiration from the Holy Spirit.

They will claim to know better than your leaders in how to do things. At the beginning of our summer series a few weeks ago, Steve preached about Jonathan Edwards and how he should be added to the list of faithful people mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11.

- [11 : 10] You can revisit all those sermons by Steve, Ash, and Nick on our website or visit our YouTube live stream. The Bible has many positive examples of how God encourages a follower to stay faithful to him.

And they are also examples of those who suffer the punishment of their rebellion towards God. And Jude uses many negative examples from the Old Testament, from verse 5 to 19.

Hebrews 11 and Jude provides a positive and negative examples of faithful interaction with God. If you're not familiar with them, you should make it your goal to read through them so that you will not fall into the same punishment as those who rebel against God.

I have compiled this leaflet of how Jude used the Old Testament. So take a copy as you leave and familiarize yourself with the negative example so that you can take Jude's warning to heart.

But Jude compiles a summary that the ungodly people are those who do not believe. They abandoned their proper dwelling and gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.

- [12 : 26] They polluted their bodies, rejected authority, and hid abuse on celestial things. He further explained that these people slander whatever they do not understand.

Jude goes on to say, these people are blameworthy at your love feast, eating with you with their slightest crime, and shepherds who feed only themselves.

The ungodly people present a worrying problem not because they actively oppose the church. They are a problem because they have secretly slipped in among the believers and infiltrate the community.

They appear to have your interest in their mind. They enjoy the fellowship and may even hold leadership positions shepherding others. But all their care and concern are themselves.

Jude described the ungodly people as clouds without rain, blown along by the wind, autumn trees without fruits and uprooted instead. They are wild waves of the sea forming up their shame, wandering stars from whom blackness has been reserved forever.

- [13 : 40] They are like clouds that overshadow others but never bring the rain that will nourish and produce growth. They like to keep you under their control.

They are fruitless trees and spiritually dead. Their fires often seem possible but will not help you to grow closer to God or his people.

They do not hold back from telling others about their experience or achievements. They appear to be committed to God or the church. Stars serve a great purpose of giving travel a direction at night, pointing the lost to a safe place.

As followers of Christ, we are to point people to Jesus for salvation. But the ungodly people are wandering stars who lead people away from God. And if people rely on their advice or follow them, they will not grow in their faith as God's intended.

So Jude continues saying, these people are grumbler, fault-finder. They follow their own evil desires. They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

[14 : 52] They grumble, they find faults in others, especially those leading them. The ungodly people often complain behind their leader's back and use flattery to manipulate and gain an advantage in getting what they want.

They are scoffers who follow their own ungodly desires. People will divide the community by following merely human instincts and do not have the spirit because they care most about getting what they want, even if it means stepping on others to get it.

They are sometimes very subtle but other times apparent in how they gain their influence over other believers. We live in a society that demands the church to change with the times to take advantage of most modern view of what it means to be a Christian.

And the demands are even coming from within the community of believers who to redefine the basic meanings of even being human in terms of gender and marriage.

We're in our current day and age where personal and individual freedom has been elevated so high as a failure of life, where self-indulgence and self-persevation is of high priority of a lot of people, especially Yarn Edo's.

[16 : 10] The warning of Jews against ungodliness is very relevant to Jesus' followers. So how are we going to content for the faith that was once for all and trusted to God's holy people?

How are we going to stay faithful to the gospel? Before we think about what we need to do, I must reassure you again that God is the one who keeps us from stumbling.

We are loved by God and called and kept saved by Jesus. God will present his people to himself as perfect reflection of his son Jesus to display his glory and share his eternal joy with his people.

But you, dear friends, by building yourself up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourself in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Jew gives us three specific instructions to how to stay faithful to the gospel, content for our faith, fight and struggle, exert intense effort like an athlete or one in warfare.

[17 : 22] But he again assures us in verse 24 that God, the glorious, majestic, powerful, authoritative, only God, our Savior, is at work, who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence with a thought and with great joy.

God's hope and power are sufficient to sustain us in the face of what God brings into our life. Even a few ungodly people or situations, God is the one who will work in you as you joy lean to him.

Interacting with people who doubt and wonder requires deep knowledge of our weaknesses and failure. It requires maturity of faith.

That is why Jude's first specific instruction is to build ourselves up in faith. Romans 10, 17 says, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Because we are prone to forget what God has done for us, we must constantly expose ourselves to God's word, which is where faith comes from. Regularly reading the Bible, hearing preached and taught, memorizing scriptures and discusses with others are ways we build ourselves up in faith.

[18 : 48] God has given us patterns in the scripture as a warning. As we see the numerous examples of those who turn away from the Lord to fold their sinful ways, we should pray and ask God to show us an area of our life where evil desire may lurk.

And that's the second specific instruction. We pray for the Holy Spirit to work in our life. And by building ourselves up this way and praying in the Holy Spirit, we keep ourselves in God's love as we await his mercy on the last day.

That's the third instruction. The way we can keep ourselves in God's love, apart from reading the Bible and praying, is to be merciful to those who doubt.

Save others by snatching them from the fire. To others show mercy, mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stink by corrupt flesh. As believers, our hope is set on Christ's mercy towards us.

So we are to show mercy to those caught in sin and deception while keeping ourselves from that sin that has trapped them. all of this require intentional effort and active participation in the body of Christ.

[20 : 07] We are vulnerable in mistaking our desires for God's will. The false teaching of those ungodly people may seem good and reasonable at first. And a false teacher may appear authentic.

It ends up pointing away from God and towards destruction. To avoid being led astray, we must rely on the scriptures, on the spirit's guidance and invite other believers to help hold us accountable.

We should take advantage of these safeguards, stay on the gospel path and assist those who are wavering. A sure sign of ungodly people is that they like to fight with others, especially their leaders.

So let me introduce you to this book called Fight for Your Pastor. A pastor is someone that's leading your life. Again, this will help you to come back ungodliness.

I bought this book last year and gave out copies to the church. So please dust them off your shelf. We'll read them again this year. And if you haven't got a copy, we've got copies out there as you go out.

[21 : 20] Please consider also donating to the church as we can make more resources available to you. less content together for the faith that was once and for all and trusted to you and me, God's holy people.

To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without thought and with great joy, to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord before all ages now and forever.

Amen.