

(Through the Bible) Jude

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of holding on to the faith and truth, and warns against the dangers of unbelief and false prophets in the church.

Duration: 1:05:58

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1-2, Ephesians 3:17-19, James 1:22, 1 John 3:18, Jude 1:16-19, Jude 1:23-25

Topics: "Spiritual Mindset", "Evangelism Methods"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being spiritually minded in a world that is temporary and will eventually be dissolved. He highlights the need to approach witnessing differently for different individuals, using compassion, love, or even fear to reach them. The preacher shares a personal experience of losing joy and love over a small incident, reminding listeners to keep their perspective on the return of the Lord and not be consumed by material possessions. The sermon also addresses the consequences of unbelief and how it can hinder individuals from receiving the blessings God intends for them.

Transcript

So we go to the general epistle of Jude. And Jude introduces himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. The word servant in Greek is *douloi*, bondsman of Jesus Christ.

But also adding this identification as brother of James, which leads to a very interesting speculation, which is in all probability correct. In Matthew's Gospel chapter 13, when Jesus was attracting great multitudes, there were those that were offended because of him. And they said, hey, we know who this is.

It's the son of Joseph, the carpenter. And aren't his brothers still around here? James and Simon and Jude? So he is named as a brother of James, but also would make him a step-brother to Jesus. In Mark's Gospel, also, James and Jude are named as brothers of Jesus.

It is a fallacy, an invention of the Catholic Church, that Mary remained a perpetual virgin. That's just one of the added benefits that they've tacked on to Mary. The perpetual virginity of Mary.

Not scriptural. In fact, we are told that Jesus' brothers really didn't believe in him, and that's why he said a prophet is not without honor except in his own country and among those of his own household. And once when Jesus was ministering at Capernaum and the crowds were pressing and he really wasn't able to

rest, almost 24 hours a day being compelled by the needs of the people, Mary and his brothers came down to rescue him.

They thought he had flipped. The pressure of so many people had gotten to him. So Mary and his brothers came to rescue him from the crowds.

Once Jesus was raised from the dead, his brothers became believers, and James became one of the leaders in the church. James, the brother of John, exited from the church very early in his history. He was one of the church... After Stephen, he was the next martyr.

Herod stretched forth his hand against the church and he had James beheaded, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he had Peter put in prison, intending to bring him forth the next day and execute him. But that night, as Peter was asleep, the angel came and woke him up and led him out of the prison. You know the story.

So James, the brother of John, was beheaded very early in church history. And this other James became one of the leaders of the earlier church and one of the spokesmen. When in the 15th chapter of the book of Acts, the question came up as far as the Gentiles' relationship to the law, the Gentile believers in Christ, their relationship to the law.

It was James who made the final proclamation that was accepted by the church and sent to the Gentile church in Antioch, encouraging them in their faith in Christ and freeing them from the responsibility of obedience to the Mosaic law. So, the identity then of Jude becomes very interesting. A servant, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, but a brother of James.

He is writing to those who are, first of all, sanctified by God. The word sanctified means to be set apart for exclusive purposes. Now, when in the Old Testament they built the tabernacle to worship God, they built the instruments that were to be used in the worship, the cups, the tables and the plates and so forth, and they sanctified them.

That is, they set them apart to be used exclusively in the worship of God and therefore were not to be used just in an ordinary sense. In other words, if you were thirsty, you weren't to grab one of these cups and get yourself a drink out of it. They were set aside for the worship of God.

It was to be used exclusively in the worship of God and so they were said to be sanctified unto God. So, when we commit our lives completely to God, sanctified, what it means is that your life has been set apart for God's use and you're really not to use it for your own purposes. So, those that have been sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ or kept in Jesus Christ and called, a typical greeting, mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

So, rather than grace, mercy and peace and love. Now, he said, Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Now, his original intention in writing to them was to just write to them concerning the common salvation that they had.

But as he sat down to write to them about the common salvation, that was what was upon his heart, the Holy Spirit changed the subject and the Holy Spirit pressed upon him to write to them encouraging them to earnestly contend for the faith that was delivered to them. So, here's an interesting thing where the Holy Spirit superseded that which Jude was intending to write, the subject upon which he was intending to

write. The Holy Spirit superseded and he writes to them concerning the necessity of holding on to the faith and to the truth that they had received.

But again, the deceivers and the false prophets were a problem to the church. So, it was needful, or it was impressed upon me to write unto you and to exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men who have crept in unaware, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, into the church had come these men. Now, the same thing is true today. There are men in the church, garbed in the robes of ministry, who deny our Lord God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am appalled at what some so-called reverends have to say about the issues of the day or about spiritual matters. I'm appalled when ministers sue President Reagan for declaring the year of the Bible, saying that that's unconstitutional. He has no right to do so.

Ministers sued him, rather than rejoicing that a president is pointing the people to the right direction for guidance for the nation. But they are the same kind that had crept into the early church. Hey, this has been the curse of the church from the beginning.

Those who purport to speak for the Lord or those who purport to be servants of Christ, planted really by Satan to undermine the faith of the simple people. You see, Satan found that he could not destroy the church by a frontal assault, so he decided to destroy it from within, and he joined the church. And the danger to the church today really doesn't lie from communism or outside forces.

The danger of the church lies from within, the corrupting leaven within the church. That's the real danger. That's the danger I fear.

That corruption from within, not the outside attacks of the enemy. That only makes the church stronger. But the church is weakened by these forces within.

And you think I'm bad? Wait until we find out what he has to say about them. They were ordained, he said, to this condemnation. Before ordained.

Before of old ordained to this condemnation. They are ungodly men who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Well, listen, God's grace, you know, will cover.

It doesn't matter. God's grace, his undeserving favor is ours, and so we can do what we please. You know, we can live like we want.

It doesn't matter. God will forgive us. God's grace will cover it, you know.

And so they use it as a cloak to cover their own lascivious lives and life standards and desires. Well, the grace of God will cover. Peter warned about those also who had twisted the words of Paul.

Unstable, unlearned persons resting the Scriptures to their own destruction. Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness. Paul spoke about them in Romans.

He said where sin abounds, grace does much more abound or grace overflows. What shall we say then? Shall we sin freely that grace may overflow? God forbid. He talked about those who were in the church

who were saying, Hey, my rotten lifestyle is only proving God's grace and love.

You know, I'm just a good example to people how God can love such rotten persons, you know. And so it's bringing glory to God. My evil, you know, vicious living brings glory to God because people say, Look, you know, God forgives and God loves even a person like that.

And they were saying, Now how can God condemn me when, you know, my life is really bringing glory to Him? Paul said whose damnation is just. They denied the only Lord God, our Lord and our Lord Jesus Christ. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this.

It's interesting how we needed to be reminded often of the things we already know. Peter said, Now I know that you know these things, but I feel it necessary to write them unto you and bring you into constant remembrance of them. And knowing that I'm going to be leaving this tent, I'm going to be moving out of my body pretty soon.

I'm now going to write them to you so even after I'm gone, you might be reminded. Certain things of which we need constant reminding. And so Jude says much the same.

I'm going to put you in remembrance of these things that you already know. How that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. So God brought the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

It was the intention of God, the desire of God, to bring them into the land that He had promised to their father Abraham. To bring them into a rich land that they could call their own, that they could possess as their own. No longer be slaves in a foreign country.

But now to have your own land and to possess your own land. Build your own houses, plant your own vineyards, eat of the fruit of your own labor. God's intention to bring them into the land that was well watered, flowing with milk and honey.

But they came into the wilderness, to the border of the new land, Kadesh Barnea. And when the spies brought back a discouraging report. Giants in the land, huge cities with high walls.

We can't go, we can't take it. The people lost faith. They did not believe that God would keep His word and deliver the land to them.

And their lack of faith, their lack of entering in, kept them from all that God had for them. They said to Moses, why did you bring us out here, you know, to perish here in the wilderness? We try and go in there, they'll kill our kids and we'll be wiped out. So God said, all right, that's it.

Moses, I will not allow them to go into the land now. But they will wander here in the wilderness for 40 years until they all die off. And their children that they were worried about being slain, they will go in and take the land.

Unbelief kept them from all that God had for them. God in His love was wanting to bless them. Wanting to bring them into this land of promise.

God in His love wants to bring you into a glorious life of fellowship and relationship with Him. Jesus said, I have come that you might have life and that more abundantly. And the Lord wants to bring you into an abundant life.

But unbelief will rob you of the things that God desires to do for you. It's amazing how unbelief can rob you of the work of God and of the blessings of God. In the Old Testament, we have the story of the king who, Jehoram, was the king in Samaria.

And the city of Samaria was being besieged by Ben-Hadad and the Syrian forces. They had cut off the food supplies. They had encircled the city and they were starving the people out.

And they had almost succeeded. The donkey's skull was selling for 65 pieces of silver. People began to boil their own children and eat them.

So desperate they were. When the king decided that Elisha was at fault for this whole problem. And he said, I'll have the head of that fellow.

And he ordered the guy to go down and behead him. Now, Elisha was sitting in his house with his friends and he had an extremely strong gift of discernment. He just knew what was going on.

In fact, when Ben-Hadad was having his secret meetings of war with his generals, Elisha was reporting to the king everything that Ben-Hadad had planned. So the king was there to ambush every sortie that was sent out against him. Until Ben-Hadad came to his generals and said, OK, one of you guys is a fink.

And I intend to find out which one. You know, it's impossible that that king could know all that we're planning to do unless one of you guys were, you know, telling. And so the general said, it's not so.

We're all of us loyal to you. But there's a guy over there in Israel and he knows what you tell your wife in the bedchamber. I mean, you can't even talk to your wife without that guy knowing what you're saying, you know.

I mean, he had a very keen gift of discernment. And so he was sitting with his friends and he says, look what that son of a murderer is planning to do now. He's sending a guy down here to get my head.

Can you beat that? He said, when the guy knocks on the door, open the door hard and hold him fast. Pin him. For behold, his master is right behind him.

So the knock came on the door and the guys opened it up and pinned the guy behind the door. And here came up King Jehoram and his head of state. And he said, oh, you've got you now.

You've been troubling Israel. And he said, come on, you're the one that's brought on the problems. You're the one that's introduced the worship of Bell and turn the people after these other gods.

And it's because of you that the problems have come. But he said tomorrow in the gate of the city of Samaria, they'll be selling a bushel of fine flour for sixty five cents. Now, the man on whom the king lean said, oh, crazy.

If God would open up windows in heaven, such a thing couldn't be. He didn't believe the promise of God. And Elijah said to him, fellow, you will see it, but you won't eat it.

That night, God caused the Syrians to hear a noise that they interpreted as chariots of the king of Egypt. And they fled, leaving their camp and all of their supplies intact. In the morning, they opened the gates so that the people of Samaria could go out who had been starving to death, remember.

To go out and get all of the booty and all the loot that was out there. And the king said to this guy who had said the night before, if God would open up windows in heaven and the prophet said, you'll see it, you won't eat it. He said, you go down there and you stand the gate, keep order as the people are going out the gate.

Hey, the people are so hungry, they trampled this guy to death. He saw it. God provided, but he didn't eat it.

That's the price of unbelief. Even when God keeps his word, you're not able to partake of it. Unbelief can hold you back from what God has given, what God desires to give, from the blessings of God.

The children of Israel, through unbelief, and we read in the Psalms, they limited the Holy One of Israel through unbelief. It holds back. Now, you see, our unbelief comes from looking at ourselves instead of looking at God.

I look at the circumstances, I look at the situations. And I say, oh, I don't see how that could be. Just can't be, man.

I've tried everything, there's no way, you know. And I give my testimony of unbelief. I've looked at myself, I've looked at my resources, I've looked at my abilities, and I've concluded there's no way.

But you see, that's because I looked at me instead of looking at God. Unbelief always comes from looking at myself and the situation in light of myself. Faith always comes from looking at God.

It turns away from the situation. Abraham considered not his own age, about a hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb, about ninety years old. He staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief.

But being strong in the faith, he gave glory to God, believing that what God had promised, he was able to perform. So, the children of Israel, the first example of those who did not enter into God's full blessings because of unbelief. Second example, the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation.

He hath reserved an everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. The Bible indicates that perhaps as many as a third of the angels rebelled with Satan against the authority and the government of God. In the book of Revelation, John saw the dragon being cast out of heaven, and with his tail he drew a third part of the stars.

And stars are often used in the scripture as a reference to the angels. We know that there are angels which did not keep their first estate, they are mentioned here. It was this commingling of angels with men before the flood that brought the flood upon the world.

The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they went unto them, and their offspring were giants. Genetic manipulation before the flood. And so these, no doubt, are the angels, kept not their first principles that God has now in chains of darkness awaiting the day of judgment.

Angels dwelt in the very presence of God. They were servants of God, messengers of God, doing His bidding, His work. And these glorious creatures, higher in creation order than man, unredeemed man.

They will be lower than us in our redeemed state, in our glorified state, we will be judging them. But in the natural state, God made Jesus a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. You see, angels can't suffer death.

But He made Jesus a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. We see Him now crowned with glory and honor, according to Hebrews. These creatures of God, dwelling there in the presence of God, the glory of God, kept not their first estate, their first principles.

And now are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, under the judgment of the great day. Third example, Sodom and Gomorrah. Cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

And God sent fire and brimstone and destroyed the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah and those cities of the plain. Cities that existed in this beautiful verdant valley that was well watered, tropical climate. Great soil, produced food without any effort.

You see, as cultures develop, the first thing is in the primitive cultures, a person is usually capable of producing enough food to keep himself alive. With primitive tools, primitive cultures, and this is what you find in areas where you really don't have any cultural, any culture kind of a development. The reason why is that people can only, they have to work all day just to provide food.

I mean, that's basic. You've got to have food. Now, it is not until the means of supplying food develop to the extent that one person can produce more food than what he needs for his own use.

The surplus of agriculture is the necessity for the development of any kind of a society or social structure within a community. So, you have a fellow who is busily engaged in providing his own food. He has to make his own tools.

He has to make his own hose, he has to make his own plows, and he has to, you know, his whole effort is in providing the food for himself, for his family. Now, as you begin to develop, here's a fellow who is especially skilled in making plows. So, he starts making plows because others are able to produce more food than what they themselves need for their own personal use, and now they can trade their food for his plows.

He's particularly adept at making plows. So, he spends his time now making plows and he trades his plows for food because they can now produce more than what they need for themselves. And that's how your society develops is through an agricultural surplus.

Now, they were able to develop the agricultural surplus in this Jordan Valley because it was so rich and verdant. So productive. You didn't have to work so hard to create enough food for your needs.

So, we are told in Ezekiel that in Sodom they had an abundance of bread and idleness of time because it was such a productive area. So, that really natural advantage. I mean, you live in an area like that where you don't have to work so hard to provide the food for what you need.

You can develop now a beneficial social structure. But instead, they use their idleness of time in just following after the flesh. Homosexuality became a very prominent thing.

Strange flesh, he calls it here. It was homosexuality that really developed there in Sodom. Kinky sex, you might say.

Strange flesh. Using their idleness of time, the abundance of bread, bringing about the idleness of time. Using it then for these corrupt purposes.

They serve as an example as they suffered the destruction of the fire and brimstone sent by God. The eternal fire. The vengeance of eternal fire.

And, in the same way, these filthy dreamers, that is the apostate teachers, they defile the flesh, they despise dominion or authority, and they speak evil of dignities. Yet, Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses and dared not to bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. Now, here is an interesting insight that the Bible doesn't give us any place but right here, and that is, we are told in the Old Testament that the Lord buried Moses.

Moses went off from the camp and God buried him. They never found his grave, they never found his body. The Lord buried him.

He died somewhere in the area of Moab, Mount Nebo, able to look over and see the land that God had promised not able to go over. And the Lord buried Moses. Well, Michael was the instrument, no doubt, that God sent to bury him.

God said, Michael, go down and bury him, you know. And Satan met him there and began to dispute with him over the body of Moses. Now, Michael didn't even make a railing accusation against the devil.

He didn't say, well, you dirty scum, you know, you can't have him, or whatever. He didn't make any railing accusation against him, he just said, the Lord rebuke thee. I am a little wary about these people who are always railing on the devil.

I'll personally tell you, I don't want any confrontation with the devil. In fact, I always want the Lord between me and the devil. I don't want any personal confrontation with him, I want the Lord between us.

And in dealing with him, I want to deal with him only through the Lord. The Lord rebuke thee. I wouldn't say, I rebuke thee, Satan.

Who am I to rebuke him? He'd say, who are you? Jesus I know and Paul I know, but who are you? But the Lord rebuke thee. Yeah, that's all right. I can handle that.

Get the Lord between him and me. And that I can handle. So even Michael, hey, one of the greatest angels in heaven, didn't make railing accusations against Satan, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.

But these filthy dreamers, these false teachers that were perverting the truth within the church, they were speaking evil of the dignities. They were speaking evil of the church leadership, of the apostles. How many times they would come in and run Paul down.

Ah, he's not a real apostle, you know, Paul's a renegade, Paul's this. And here he was anointed of God and doing such a great work. And these false teachers though, they always try to improve their stock by running down someone that God is using.

You know, it makes them look better. They can find flaws in someone. So people take pot shots at Billy Graham, you see.

If I can find faults in Billy Graham, well hey, I'm able to judge him. If he would only do this and that and the other, you know, then he could be as successful. But people do that, they try to raise, well, someone said, you'll never gain ground by throwing mud.

But yet that seems to be the philosophy of many people. They try to, you know, increase their stock by tearing down someone else. They speak evil of things that they don't even know about.

This is so true and it's crazy, but, you know, there are people who have spoken evil of the work that God is doing here and they don't even know about it. They've never been here. I'm amazed at some of the articles I've read in magazines and papers and so forth about things that are supposedly happening here at Calvary Chapel.

And in the days when the hippies were around, you know, someone with great authority said, oh, I was at one of those houses and, you know, the kids climbing up nude in the trees to read their Bible smoking a joint, you know. Crazy stuff. They speak evil of things they don't even know about.

Have never bothered to examine. But what things they do know naturally as brute beast, I mean, you have a certain innate, natural knowledge, they even corrupt that. Woe to them! They've gone the way of Cain.

The way of hatred. The way of bitterness. The way of the works of the flesh rather than relying upon the work of God.

They've run greedily after the error of Balaam. Filled with greed. They look to better their own position using the things of God or their knowledge of the things of God.

They perished in the gainsaying of Korah. As Korah came to Moses and said, you've taken too much upon yourself putting Aaron, your brother, in the position of going in before the Lord. We're Levites.

We have as much right as Aaron. He perished when the ground opened up and swallowed him. Now, here's what he has to say about these false teachers and apostles, apostate teachers.

They are spots in your feast of love. When they feast with you, they are feeding themselves without fear. They are clouds without water carried about with the winds.

They are trees whose fruit withers without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Now, rain, of course, was always a welcome thing in that land. It's a desert area.

And the clouds form and you have the promise, oh, it's going to be great, we're going to get some rain. You know, they give great swelling words of promise. We're going to do this, we're going to do that.

But there's no substance, no rain. Clouds without water, they're carried about with every wind. They are fruit that withers.

It doesn't really come to maturity. It doesn't really develop fully. Again, it gives the promise, oh, there's a blossom.

I've got an apricot tree. The rottenest tree, I swear I'm going to cut it down. In the springtime, it blossoms out.

And it even sets some little apricots. But they always fall off. Never develop.

Every year, I think, oh, this year. And I told the tree, I said, look, if you give me one apricot, I'll let you live. And that tree's got to go.

It gives the promise, but it never produces. Apostate teachers, they give all kinds of promises they never produce. The fruit withers, it dries up.

They are like raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame. Just driven. No real purpose, just raging waves foaming.

Wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now, Gehenna is described as the place of the eternal abode of Satan and his followers. Jesus described Gehenna as existing in outer darkness.

Our scientists have discovered galaxies that they estimate to be some 12 billion light years from the earth. But they, at the present time, believe that that is the edge of the universe. They do believe that they have discovered the edge of the universe some 12 billion light years away.

They've just recently funded for a new telescope that will probe the heavens. Seventy million dollars. It'll be set up in Hawaii.

And they are hoping to maybe catch the light of galaxies that are so far away that it has not yet reached the earth. Now, out beyond the furthest galaxy, say 12 billion light years away, for sake of argument, what if you continued out beyond that galaxy for another, say, 100 billion light years distance? Because it would seem to me that space would be infinite. I mean, I can't imagine a sign out there, this is the end of space.

So imagine being able to travel beyond the furthest galaxy, say another 100 billion light years. But they wouldn't really be light years because light wouldn't get out that far yet. You'd be in total darkness.

Have you ever been in total darkness? I mean, total darkness. Down in the Oregon caves. You get way down there in the caves and then they turn off the lights and they say, you can now experience total darkness.

It's so dark you can feel it. In total darkness you feel. It says that there's a darkness in Egypt that they can feel.

And you can actually feel total darkness. I mean, it's an awesome sensation to be in total darkness. It's something that's very rare.

But to get out that far into the universe, you would get out into total darkness. What a fitting place for God to put the people who hate the light. Jesus said they will not come to the light because they hate the light.

Outer darkness, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now that would be awesome. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.

Now, this reference to Enoch prophesying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, is found in the book of Enoch, which is known as an apocryphal book. An apocryphal book is a book whose authorship is questioned and has not been brought in and accepted as a part of the canon of Scripture. There are doubts as to its authenticity or of its inspiration.

The book of Enoch, the apocryphal book of Enoch, is such. Now, Jude no doubt was aware of this statement from Enoch from somewhere. The book of Enoch does have this statement in it, but the book of Enoch that we have, the apocryphal book of Enoch, didn't show up until about the second century.

So, whoever wrote that book of Enoch could have known that Jude made reference to it and so included it in the book of Enoch so that it looked like it was a very authentic book. But that book of Enoch, the apocryphal book, did not turn up until the second century. It was not, of course, one of the books that was copied by the Hebrew scholars that wanted to put the Scriptures in the Greek language, the Septuagint, so that the Jews of Jesus' day could understand the Scriptures or read them for themselves.

So, he does make reference to this prophecy of Enoch. So, Enoch was a prophet. He was a man that we know walked with God, was not before God took him.

Before God took him, he had this testimony that he pleased God, but without faith it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that he is and a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. So, he was a man who was raptured before his time.

He experienced the rapture several thousand years before Christ. Actually, he was raptured before the flood. He was the 10th from Adam, 10th generation from Adam, or 7th, was it? 7th from Adam.

7th generation from Adam. So, Enoch testified that the Lord is going to come with 10,000 of his saints. Now, when Jesus comes, we're going to be coming with him.

And when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. In the 19th chapter of the book of Revelation, as Jesus mounts the white horse to come back to the earth, and the armies that came with him riding on white horses, the church returning with Christ in power and glory to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth. So, Enoch prophesied of these things.

Behold, the Lord cometh with 10,000 of his saints to execute judgment upon all. Now, in the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 61 of the coming of Jesus Christ, the one that Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth, the prophecy of Isaiah said to execute judgment, to proclaim the day of the Lord. Jesus did not read this portion of the prophecy.

But he closed the scroll of Isaiah before he got to this portion. Because his first coming was not to include the judgment. That's to be in the second coming.

And in Matthew's Gospel 24-25, where he talks to them about his second coming, then when he comes, he will gather together the nations for judgment, and he will separate them as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Now, behold, the Lord cometh with 10,000 of his saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed and of all of their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. The day of judgment is coming.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lust, and their mouths speak great swelling words, having persons in admiration because of advantage. So, these are the typical politicians. Having persons in admiration because of advantage.

The politicking of man. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. How they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk after their own ungodly lust.

This is probably a reference to Peter. In Peter's epistle, he said, in the last days, scoffers will come saying, where is the promise of His coming? These are they who separate themselves. They are sensual.

They do not have the Spirit. But you, in contrast, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, our faith should be increasing. Our faith should be growing.

The longer you walk with the Lord, the greater your faith should be. Faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the Word of God.

What advantage of coming out on Sunday nights? Your faith is growing. Because you're learning about God. Because we're doing nothing but just going through the Word of God.

And even as we go through it and read it, what we read is going to be an advantage and benefit to you, though what I may say may never make any impression at all. Just the reading and the hearing of the Word is going to build your faith. Because you're going to begin to understand more and more about God.

And the more you understand Him, the more you'll trust Him and learn to trust Him. Building up yourself on the most holy faith. Praying in the Holy Spirit.

Asking the Holy Spirit to direct your prayer. In cases, groaning in the Spirit because of situations. Or in other cases, if you have the gift, praying in an unknown tongue.

Keep yourselves in the love of God. That's the important thing. You see, God loves you, and because He loves you, He wants to bless you.

He wants to bestow His goodness upon your life. But it is possible for you to get out of the place of God's blessing. As the children of Israel, who through unbelief did not enter into the full blessings that God had intended for them.

So you can keep yourselves from the full blessings that God wants to bestow upon you because of His love. Even as the angels, which kept not their first estate, lifted up with pride, rebelled against God. So you, through pride and rebellion against God, can put yourself outside of the place of God's blessings upon your life.

God won't do for you those things He desires to do in His love for you. So, as those of Sodom and Gomorrah who used their idleness of time in the pursuit of their own lusts, so you, giving yourself over in this day of idleness of time and abundance of opportunities of going after your own lustful desires, if you use the idleness of time in the pursuit of your lust in the flesh, you're going to move yourself away from the place of God's love and God's blessing. That is, God can't do for you what He... It doesn't cause... God says, well, I don't love Him anymore.

Look at the way He's living. No, no, God still loves you, but He weeps. He can't do for you what He wants to do because your life is inconsistent with Him.

Like Cain, if you allow hatred to fill your heart, God can't bless you. Like Balaam, if you allow greed to fill your heart, God can't bless you. Like Korah, if you allow jealousy to master your life, God can't bless you, can't do for you what He wants to do.

Keep yourself in the love of God. Keep yourself in that place where God can do all that He is wanting to do for you because of His infinite love. As we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, looking for the Lord to come again at any time, looking for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, realizing that this could happen tonight and all of these things of the material realm that we've been working on, building up and so forth, poof, we're going to burn.

And then the only thing of value you're going to possess are the spiritual things. The whole material gain will be gone. And some of you who may be materially very rich could be spiritual paupers.

So you're rich for a few years and you're a pauper for eternity. Oh, yeah, you'll be in the kingdom, but barely. The Bible says that we should pray that we might have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God.

You say, oh, I thought salvation wasn't by works. Of course it isn't. You can't work to receive a gift.

Salvation is a gift, but we will be judged according to our works and our place in eternity will be determined by our works. Not salvation, that's a gift of God. But there will be positions within the kingdom, ranks within the kingdom, determined by the faithfulness in our stewardship now, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life.

Several years ago, a fellow came up to me here in the church, said, Chuck, I want you to have a new car. I laughed. I said, I never buy a new car.

Too much depreciation, I let someone else take the loss. He said, I own a dealership here in Orange County and I want you to come over and pick out the car you want and I'm going to take the depreciation off the price. He said, I'll give it to you at my cost and you can pick all the options that you want and I'll put them on.

So I went over to the dealership and I picked out my dream car. All the options that General Motors offered. The color I wanted.

They sent the order in to Detroit and they manufactured the car and then he called me up and said, your car is here. So I went over to pick it up. Turned in my old used car and drove out of the dealership with this brand new car.

First time I'd ever had a brand new car, the smell was all mine. Belonged to me, you know, that special new car smell. As I drove out of the dealership, I knew that everybody was watching me.

Admiring that car. You know, as I drove down the street, I could see people's heads. At least I thought I did.

Turn and look at that fancy car. Oh man, it was nice to drive. All the way home, I was praising the Lord.

Worship, Lord, you're so good. Wow. New car.

Lord, you're... Oh, this is outrageous, Lord. I love it, you know. So good to me.

I love you, Lord. My wife had said, honey, would you pick up some milk on your way home? So I went to Alpha Beta. While I was in the store, wheeling the cart around the store, getting the few things my wife wanted, just praising the Lord.

Because I knew as I got out of that car in the parking lot, everybody was out there just, you know, looking at that thing. Man, was I enamored by it. Oh Lord, you're so good.

I love you so much. Oh my Lord, this is glorious. Got to the check stand, checked out.

Came out to the car and there in the driver's side, my door, some stupid, inconsiderate nincompoop had opened up their car door carelessly, recklessly, put a ding, a dimple. I hadn't even gotten home yet. I was so mad.

I quickly tried to see if there was any paint sample there. Play detective, see if I can get the color of the car. Maybe it's still here in the parking lot and I can pound on somebody.

Boy, was I upset. All the way home from the store, I was just miserable. Rotten people, rotten world.

I hate, hate, hate people, you know. Inconsiderate. Boy, you can be glad I'm not God.

I'd have sent half the world to hell in a moment. Took the groceries into the house. My son, Chuck Jr., was there.

I said, hey, Dad, did you get your new car? I said, yeah. He said, oh, I want to see it. I said, sure, you know.

So he went out and it was a convertible. He put the top up and down. He, you know, did all the push-button things, window seats, the whole 10 yards.

And then, as he was standing back and looking, he said, oh, oh, Dad, what's that? And I said, would you believe, while I was in the market, some stupid, dirty, rotten. I started to get into my little thing again. And Chuck said to me, hey, Dad, it's all going to burn.

And I said, thank you, son, I needed that. I lost perspective. You know, the shininess of the new car, the luxury appointments and all.

I lost perspective. I forgot that the whole thing was going to burn. Hey, the thing did burn, I guess, on the highway.

I got a thing from the DMV the other day and wanted to know if I knew anything about that car. I said, hey, I sold that car years ago. Well, it's been abandoned on the highway, you know, the engine's blown up, it's all going to burn.

And I could hear the Lord, in a sense, saying to me, when I was on my way home from the market, where's all the joy and the glory and the blessing and the love that you were talking about a few moments ago, you know. All dissipated over one little ding. You know, from, oh Lord, you're so good, I love you so much, to God, I hate people.

One little ding, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life. As we look for the return of the Lord, hey, it keeps your perspective. It's all the material world going to burn.

Seeing then that all these things, pulpit, mic, stereos, televisions, buildings, seeing that all these things are going to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be? Spiritual. Now, on some, have a compassion, making a difference. On others, save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

You can't witness to everybody alike. I mean, this pattern witnessing, or this little can witness, is not really good. People are different.

People are different temperaments. Some, you've got to scare the hell out of them. Others, are drawn by love.

Some, win with compassion, making a difference. Others, by fear, pulling them out of the fire. I mean, what's that mean? Now, it means that we've got to be led by the Spirit as we deal with people.

Hating even the garment that has been spotted by the flesh. Pull them out of the fire. But hate the garment spotted by the flesh.

The close of the epistle is with a benediction, a beautiful benediction, one that is used quite often in the church. Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Hey, that's exactly how the Lord's going to present me, faultless before the presence of His glory.

That's how He's going to present you. There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Jesus bore the sins of the world.

Every sin you have ever or will ever commit, Jesus died for. All covered by the blood. Now, we don't take the grace of God and use it as a cloak for lasciviousness.

No, no, no. He who does evil doesn't really know God. But thank God for those who believe and are trusting in Jesus Christ and seeking to walk.

We may stumble, we may fall, but He's going to present us faultless when He presents us to the Father. Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Savior, in reference to Jesus Christ.

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. When the Lamb takes the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne, there in glory, the angels will declare worthy is the Lamb to receive dominion and glory and might and power.

To the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen. Next week, start the exciting book of Revelation and overview of the book.

And now may you be doers of the Word and not hearers only deceiving yourselves. May we go forth and practice the injunctions. And basically, they are walk in truth and the truth is we are to love one another.

And so may God's love just dwell in your hearts richly through faith. And may you walk in love and increase in love and increase in your knowledge and understanding of God's love for you. And may you

keep yourself in the love of God.

So that this week God can do all the wonderful things He wants to do for you just because He loves you so much. May you experience the touch of God's love in a new and special way. In Jesus' name.

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