

Contend for the Faith

by Erlo Stegen

Jude's letter is an urgent call to contend for the faith and resist false teaching, emphasizing the importance of spiritual discernment and living according to God's will.

Duration: 1:02:04

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 3:21, Jude 1:3-4, Jude 1:6

Topics: "Faith"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker recounts a conversation with their grandfather who complained about his physical ailments. The speaker emphasizes the importance of addressing sin before focusing on physical pain. They mention that sin is not a problem for them personally, but rather the pain in their body. The speaker also discusses the need for repentance and the consequences of sin, referencing the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. They conclude by mentioning a past revival in Wales and how the transformation of the people was evident, but now darkness seems to prevail.

Transcript

Lord Jesus, won't you please be with us? Speak to us, O Lord, through your word. Amen. Our text for this Reformation Day we find in Jude.

And we'll read from the first verse. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, to those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ. Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

Dear friends, Although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. This letter of Jude is an amazing letter. It was written to all the believers, including us.

And he introduces his letter in this way. Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. This Jude grew up together with the Lord Jesus.

He was Jesus' brother. And a brother of James, not James the Apostle, but the author of the book of James in the Bible. And after the resurrection of Jesus, they believed in him.

They had one mother, Mary. But their blood was not the same. They had a blood, a type of blood like ours, filled with sin.

But Jesus' blood wasn't the same. His blood was a precious blood without sin. His blood was a precious blood without sin.

Jude and James didn't believe in the Lord Jesus at the start. According to John, they came to Jesus and they said, Brother, it's time now to go up to the feast in Jerusalem. And he said to them, Look, your time is always, you go up to Jerusalem, but my time hasn't yet come.

According to Mark 3.21, Jesus was busy preaching and speaking to people. When his brothers heard him speak there, they came and they took hold of him and they said to him, You're mad, let's go, you're insane. They took hold of him and said, You're mad.

Now that happens. Jesus said, A prophet is never recognized in his own country or amongst his own people. But after Jesus had risen from the dead, James and Jude believed.

And they wrote letters and books which we find in the Bible today. This one of Jude, which we've just read from. This one of Jude, which we've just read from.

And the way in which they honored him and worshipped him, they didn't point out the fact or even mention once that they were brothers to him. They would say, like Jude here, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James. They no longer knew him according to the flesh.

In the New Testament we read where it is said, We no longer know Jesus according to the flesh. But when I read the letters of Jude and James, it's something very special to me. And that which they say about our Lord is precious to me.

And here Jude writes to those who had just recently got converted. Those who had repented, who had confessed their sin and surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ and followed him. And Jude says, for a long time already he had desired to write to them.

And he was very eager to write a letter to the brethren concerning the salvation which we all share. I don't know what that letter would have been like, a letter concerning the salvation which we have received. But even though he had wanted to write about that, when he started writing, he felt that he had to write about another topic.

He says he felt pressed not to write about the salvation which we share, but to contend for the faith that was entrusted to us. For what reason? He said because of certain men who have secretly slipped in amongst the believers. And they were teaching them something which was false.

Just imagine something like that. During the apostolic age, right at the beginning of the church, when the gospel was still young. There were those men already who slipped in secretly amongst the believers and they started teaching things that are false.

Coming in secretly, infiltrating. And he said that God had written about these people or God had already spoken about these people before that time. Of whom it was said that they would be condemned.

They are godless men who don't fear God and they changed the grace of our God into a license for immorality. What did these people say? They would say it's good that you repent, that you give your lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and even that you confess your sin. And that you leave behind your old lives.

But remember Jesus Christ has paid the price for your sin. I would say, well, Jesus has paid the price. Jesus has paid the price for your sin, even your future sin.

So whether you go back to that sin and go and commit it again, it doesn't matter because Jesus has paid the price. It doesn't matter if you go back to your sin. They were false prophets saying Jesus has paid the price for your sin.

Your past, present and future sins. So even if you fall into sin again, it doesn't matter. Jesus has already paid for that sin that you are still going to commit.

He's paid for your past sins and he's paid even for the sins that you are still going to commit. He's paid for everything. And if you read his words, he doesn't say exactly the words I'm going to tell you, but it's the same.

He says those people are damned. They are lost. God's judgment is going to come upon them.

There is no sin that you commit that will go without its consequences. Let me tell you, don't be fooled like those people and say Jesus paid for everything. So it's not so serious.

If I've sinned, if you've sinned, confess, as he says in this letter, as quick as possible and repent of that sin. And don't live one minute longer in it. That's why he says, He says in verse three, defend the truth.

If it's the truth, and it was the truth, that shortly after the Lord's resurrection and the spreading of the gospel, not many years, Jude had to write that these false preachers and false brethren had come in and were spreading their evil. And that beautiful letter he wanted to write for such a long time about our wonderful salvation of which we are all partakers. He says, I can't anymore because I see these evil men creeping amongst you and spreading their evil.

He says, remember the children of Israel as they came out of Egypt. He said, God wasn't pleased with them and he destroyed them on the way. He destroyed them because of their unbelief.

They were so happy, they had rejoiced that they had crossed the Red Sea. They were victorious and they came out with joy out of Egypt. But the very same hand that saved them was the hand that later on destroyed them.

Just think about it, the very hand that saved them turned against them and destroyed them in his wrath. They had the promise to enter the promised land where milk and honey flows, overflowing life. They had the most wonderful promises but they were all nullified, even if they stood upon them.

God cancelled it and said you won't enter. He had promised it to them. People could turn against him, against God and say, but you've trammised us and you didn't keep your promise.

You can't expect God to fulfil his promises that he gave to you in the past if you don't keep his word. You can't expect God to fulfil his promises that he gave to you in the past if you don't keep his word. They on the way indulged in sinful pleasures like dancing and eating and living immorally, making idols for themselves and bowing down to those idols.

Dancing around that golden calf which was made by them. Now Jude reminded them of that. Now remember that child of God.

Don't get involved in immorality. Don't grumble against God. Don't go into the world because then God will destroy you.

The same one who saved you, he will go against you. And he also gave another illustration. And he says the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home, these he has kept in darkness bound with everlasting chains for judgement on the great day.

He is reminding them and he is reminding us. He says God didn't even spare the angels when they left their rightful place. And he has bound them with chains to this very day in darkness awaiting their eternal condemnation.

And then the example. And then the example of Sodom and Gomorrah. He said in a similar way Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion.

And so the fire of God, the judgement of God came down of heaven, consumed them and turned them into ashes. John told us about Wales. They had a wonderful revival in 1903 in those years.

In such a wonderful way that the donkeys that were working in the coal mines wouldn't work anymore. The people were rough. They swore.

When they got converted they turned into gentlemen. And they didn't use that big language anymore. And the donkeys didn't understand that.

They were used to those swearing words and they didn't use them anymore. And they couldn't understand their masters. The masters had changed.

Now after 100 years, that wonderful singing, that mighty work of God, that revival, you don't seem to find a trace of it. You just find darkness. Why? Evil men got in.

The devil himself got in. About 100 years ago, God started revival in Korea. That Buddhist nation is called today a Christian nation.

They send out the most missionaries into the world. You see the difference? What happened in Wales and how did it go in Korea? In Wales, they steal cars, just think of it. A person with a white credit and burns them.

They've got no work. And in Korea, they're working. They're prosperous.

They're producing many, many cars. Some ministers, cleric people, are sitting on toilets and when you sit there, you don't know which button to press. There are so many buttons.

And you don't know what do all these buttons mean. And they come out of the bush. But today they are crying again.

Because that fire doesn't burn anymore as it burned. Some have got the biggest churches. But if you go into the toilets in their churches, you see drawings on the wall and you say, Oh my, how is such a thing possible? One young man who came here to KwaSisabantu went to Korea.

He went with them into the mountains to pray. When they got out of that long prayer meeting, to go back home, he sat next to a young girl. And then, that young girl started flirting with him.

Coming out of that long prayer meeting, touching his leg. When no leg should be touched, especially not by a girl. If it's a girl, that's the normal thing.

Can revivals carry on when there are such abominations among them? Well, Jesus died for us. He paid for our sins. If a girl and a boy are friendly and flirting together, what does that mean? Doesn't mean Jesus paid.

And those are the evil men of whom Jude speaks. If you return to your old sins and they return to you, it doesn't mean a thing that Jesus died for you. He'll damn you.

You are doomed. You are hell bound. And Jude says, as God judged those angels, he's going to judge you as well.

And you'll be in the same place with them. If a girl and a boy are friendly and flirting together, what does that mean? Doesn't mean Jesus paid. If a girl and a boy are friendly and flirting together, what does that mean? Doesn't mean Jesus paid.

And Jude says, as God judged those angels, he's going to judge you as well. I'm just touching on a few points here and there, not everything. In verse 11, he says, woe to them.

They have taken the way of Cain. Cain was in a service. And then there was some feeling against his brother.

And he killed his brother. And Jude says, woe to them. They walked the way of Cain.

Those are Christians born again. But that can kill their own brothers. They don't take a stick.

They don't take a saquila. They don't take a revolver. But with their words, they speak negatively about them and they kill them.

And Jude says, woe to them. They have taken the way of Cain. They have taken the way of Cain.

They don't take a stick. They don't take a revolver. They don't take a saquila.

And Jude says, they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error. Balaam wanted to have and gain profit and rushed into error because of that. So you get preachers who choose where they want to go and preach, for which church, in which group, because they say, when I go there, I don't get anything, I remain poor, but if I go to that group, well there I'll get some profit, I'll get some money, I'll be well off.

Those people have rushed for profit into Balaam's error. They shouldn't be in the church, they shouldn't open their mouths and preach the gospel, they're not worthy of that. I don't know, as we are seated here, whether we are pure before God or not.

Are we people that are to be condemned, numbered together with the angels who sinned, and those from Sodom and Gomorrah? Jude says, brethren, I warn you. I warn you, I warn you. Are we people that are right with God? Are we sharp? Do we have discernment? Are we able to discern between that which is right and wrong? Or are we like heaps of dung that the green flies follow after, and they even come, and they sit on you, and they sit on your leg, and they contaminate you? Now, this is an opportune time, on this day of reformation, this reformation day, to examine our lives, to see, are we walking according to God's way, according to his will? Are we walking

according to God's will? On the 31st of October, 1517, Martin Luther went, and he nailed his 95 theses to that church door, points that he raised where he said, this is not right in the church, and that's not right in the church.

And I suggest that on this reformation day, you go home, and you write down all the things in your life that are not right. You've got the Bible, and Luther's time, they didn't have the Bible. If you'd go to church, they'd read from the Bible in Latin, and sing in Latin.

But because of the reformation, we have the Bible. And we can read our Bibles for ourselves, so we can read God's word, and examine our lives in the light of God's word. So Luther said that there are things in the church that aren't in accordance with God's word.

But at one point, that was of paramount importance, that was this scripture alone. Only God's word is our sure guide. Is that true in your life? The way you women dress? Is it according to God's word? Or do we say the word of God doesn't imply, doesn't have anything to do with it? That word in the Bible that says if a woman wears men's garments, and men's womens, is an abomination to God.

No, that doesn't count today, because it's natural, it's our culture, it's done that way. And Luther said, scripture alone, not the other Christians, not their culture, but what does God say? Leading point. Another point was faith alone.

Not by your works, not by trying to do different things will you be justified, but we are justified by faith alone. And we are saved by grace alone, not because of your looks, not because of how much money you give to the church, or different reasons, but by grace alone. There is so much we could say about that, I said that we're just touching on the hem of the garment.

We're just touching on the hem of the garment, we're just touching on the hem of the garment. Just touching on the hem of the garment. We're just touching on the hem of the garment.

spiritually speaking before God and ask and say Lord haven't I perhaps gone astray and gone into Balaam's era where I see myself as being right as a child of God and yet I find myself on Cain's way Luther posted his 95 theses there on that church door saying these are errors in the church I'm being pharisee, don't be a Pharisee, don't be a scribe or a hypocrite but go and write down those things in your life that are not in accordance with God's Word. If you don't find anything go to your wife, if she doesn't see anything go to your children. If they are not straight enough to tell you, go to your servants.

Go to those that are very small in your eyes because Jesus said what you do to them you do to me. If you accept them you accept me. If you reject them you reject me.

Don't only go to your friends, go to your foes. Sometimes they speak the truth in a better way than those friends that don't want to hurt you. And you remember that women's meeting in Fe'enachem where there were about 200 or more women where I had to preach.

And after the service there was such a huge crowd of them. Those women had many ailments I tell you. I think over half of them were there who wanted to be prayed for.

I said I can't pray for you. When I pray for a person, a person has got to be counseled first. The Bible says spiritual healing starts with the heart.

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