

The Walking Shoes of the Local Church

by Greg Locke

Greg Locke emphasizes the importance of contending for the faith and showing compassion in the local church amidst apostasy and false teachings.

Duration: 46:31

Scripture: Mark 9:36, Jude 1:3

Topics: "Compassionate Ministry", "Faithfulness Matters"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by emphasizing the importance of love in action, drawing from the example of Jesus in the book of Mark. He highlights how Jesus was moved with compassion when he saw people who were lost and without direction. The preacher then moves on to discuss the theme of contending for the faith, using the book of Jude as a reference. He explains that it is necessary to diligently write and exhort others in order to shake them up and encourage them in their faith. The preacher also touches on the importance of showing compassion towards others, as we will reap what we sow. He concludes by emphasizing the need for the local church to take care of God's people and fulfill their responsibilities.

Transcript

We find out that Jude is the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, according to history. Now it's not certain what local church Jude was writing to. Most people believe he was writing to one of the local churches there in Asia Minor, which were referred to in Revelation chapter number 2 and Revelation chapter number 3. But nonetheless, it is obvious that he's writing to God's people.

It's obvious that Jude has a heartbeat. He is a red-hot, fiery preacher that pulls no punches. He has no-holds-barred type of a ministry.

He jumps in with both guns blazing, and buddy, I mean, he just begins to chop and let the chips fall where they may. The theme of the book of Jude is the theme of apostasy. The word apostasy is the Greek word apostasia.

It means to depart from or to turn away from the truth. That's exactly what was happening in the 25 verses of the simple little book of Jude. People had crept into the local church, and false prophets and heretics and hypocrites had crept in in such a way that they were leading God's people astray, and they were preaching false doctrine.

Now you turn on your radio, you read your newspaper, and you turn on TVN, and you'll find out those same apostates are alive and well in the day and age in which we live. But the Apostle Jude had a ministry of helping the people of God. He wanted them to know that all of heaven was behind them, and he wanted them to know that they should go on in the good grace of God, not let these apostates destroy the local church, not let them pervert the local church, but Jude gave these people a discourse on how to keep living for God in the midst of apostate times.

Now I want to give you a simple outline tonight. This outline is introduction. I am not going to preach on this outline but for 3, 4, 5 minutes.

So when I preach 5 minutes, don't get excited because I'm going to get to the message in verse 22. Alright? And so number one, look in your Bibles at verse 3, would you? Jude verse number 3. And write down, for the sake of an outline, what I call the contending for the faith. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful, necessary, it was appropriate, if you will, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort.

The word exhort means to shake up just a little bit. It is the same word the Apostle Paul uses in 2 Timothy chapter 4 for preaching. He says I should exhort you that you should earnestly, with vigor, with enthusiasm, with excitement, not be a deadhead about it.

He said you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. And so first of all, by way of an outline, he deals with the contending for the faith. Now ladies and gentlemen, we can contend without being contentious.

And I want you to understand that according to my Bible, from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21, there are some things that God's people ought to fight about. There are some things that are worth living for. There are some things worth dying for.

And yes, ladies and gentlemen, for God's people in this local church, there are some things, ladies and gentlemen, that are worth fighting for. For example, we ought not let the ACLU and the NAACP tell us that we can't preach the word of God. I'm not going to give in to the liberals, and I don't think we ought to give in to the modernists.

I do believe we ought to preach thus saith the Lord. I believe we ought to be faithful in our service for Jesus Christ. I believe in the fundamentals of the faith.

I believe we ought to preach the virgin birth and the blood atonement and the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus. I believe we ought to preach the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus. I believe we ought to preach the soon come again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm not afraid to open my mouth and open my Bible in any church, no matter the size, and tell them that I have a copy of the infallible, inerrant word of Almighty God, that it's perfect, that it's complete from cover to cover and from quiver to quiver. And there's some things, ladies and gentlemen, that is worth fighting for. And Jude wrote to that local church and said, what you need to do is realize that there's some things that we should contend for, and what we should contend for is the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

And church, I do not believe that we should give the faith over to the liberals. I don't think we should give it over to the modernists. I'm not afraid of being called a fundamentalist.

I'm not afraid of what the world calls me. I'm a fundamentalist. I believe in the fundamentals of the faith, and everything in this world has fundamentals, including this Bible.

And I believe God's people ought to stand for the true fundamentals of the faith. It's always worked in the past. It works right now.

And when you and I and our pea-sized brains are dead cold and six feet in the ground, the fundamentals will still be just that. They'll be fundamentals. And God's people need to draw the line and earnestly contend for the faith.

And so, number one, he deals with the contending for the faith. But look, if you would, please, in verse number five. Verse number five of the book of Jude, we deal then from verses five through verse number ten, which we will not read, what I call the corruption of the flesh.

The corruption of the flesh. Notice, please, verse five. I will therefore put you in remembrance that you once knew then how the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting change under darkness, under the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities round about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, and set forth for an example sufferings of vengeance of eternal fire. Notice, please, verse eight.

Likewise, also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignity. So, in verses one through four, we have the contending for the faith. In verses five through ten, we have the corruption of the flesh.

And basically, this is what Jude is explaining to the people. That these apostates, that these backslidden, no good for nothing, low down, good for nothing preachers that have trepped into the churches, and that have preached false doctrine, that the reason they have done this is for their own fleshly appetite. He said they're filthy dreamers.

And Jude warns the people about giving too much credit to their flesh. I want to tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. I'm saved by the grace of God.

I'm just as saved today as I ever will be saved. I will not lose my salvation. I could swing over hell in a rotten cornstalk, spit the devil in the eye, and sing Amazing Grace.

But I'm going to tell you something. I'm not so foolish as to think that Greg Locke's flesh still can't rear its ugly head. I've got a flesh that I better not give an inch, because every time you give your flesh an inch, it will take a mile.

I am capable today of doing things within my body that I never thought I would do. And I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, you better watch out about the corruption of the flesh, because your flesh has never been saved by the grace of God, and it never will be saved by the grace of God until you die and kick up glory dust on the streets of gold. And Jude warned these people about the corruption and the utter wickedness of our flesh.

And that's why the apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 8, he said, when I want to do right, I do wrong. When I don't want to do wrong, I still do wrong. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And one day as we sing the song, we'll drop this robe of flesh and rise. And so Jude warned them about the corruption of the flesh. But please also notice in your Bible, if you would please, in verse number 11.

Verse number 11, he says, Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Corinth. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear. Clouds they are without water, carried about of wind.

Trees, whose fruit without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea. Foaming out their own shame, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. And we could continue reading, but in verses 11 through 21, we have what I call the condemnation of false religion.

You see, we have the contending for the faith, we have the corruption of the flesh, and now we have the condemnation of the false religious system. And he looks at these people and says, I want you to be careful, church, that you use the Bible as your rule of thumb, that the Bible is your only authority for faith and practice, that you stand upon the fundamental, firm principles of the Word of God, he said, because there is a crooked religious system that cares more about money, that cares more about numbers, that cares more about their own fleshly appetite than they do about a relationship with Jesus Christ. And I'm going to tell you something.

Did you know right now in America, we're selling more Bibles than we've ever sold before? Right now in America, per capita, more people are in synagogues and temples and mosques and church than ever before. And we've got more people since September 11th who wave the flag and who wave a Bible and who wear a religious t-shirt. And I'm going to tell you the problem in America, America's got just enough religion to die and go straight to hell with.

Because religion has never saved a person. Religion will never save a person. For religion is what damns people to hell.

Because religion is me trying to gain God's favor. But I'm glad, ladies and gentlemen, you don't have to have religion. You have to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, and Jude condemned false religion.

He said there's no substance to it. He said they're like a tree that doesn't have any fruit. He said they're like a tree that doesn't have any roots.

He said they're like big clouds that don't have any rain. He said they're like raging, foaming waves of the sea. And get it, who for them is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

He's speaking of this religious system that is anti-God, that will never make it to God's kingdom. But please look tonight in your Bibles, if you would, at verse number 22. Because right in the midst of apostasy, right in the midst of ungodliness and immorality, right in the midst of Him telling these people to put up your dukes and fight the devil, to watch out for the onslaughts of the devil and of your flesh, and to watch out for the wayward people of the world, after He goes through all of this, notice what Jude says in verse number 22, and of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling

them out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted by the flesh.

Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory, of exceeding joy, to the only wise God and our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. And then He encourages the church to say, Amen. This is what I call the compassion on the Jews.

You see, ladies and gentlemen, the entire book of Jude basically centers around two verses. The entire book of Jude, as far as key themes are concerned, it centers around verse number three, to earnestly contend, but while we are earnestly contending, it also surrounds verse number 22 that we are to have compassion on those who need to be saved by the grace of God. And so in the midst of dealing with contending for the faith, in the midst of dealing with the corruption of the flesh and the condemnation of the false religious system, He now tells what God's people should have as a local church is compassion on few people.

To have compassion on those who are without. Do you know what the word compassion means? It literally has the idea of love in action. You remember, please don't turn there, but in the book of Mark, in chapter number nine, Jesus came into a certain city, and the Bible says when He looked on those people, He was moved with compassion.

You know why? Because they were a sheep having no shepherd. They were scattered abroad. There was no direction in their life.

They had no idea where they were going and what they were doing, but they were lost and they were scattered abroad. And the Bible says that Jesus was moved with compassion. Did you know your New Testament Bible says that four times about Jesus? Four times.

And not one time does it say when He was moved with compassion that He sat down and let somebody else do the job. No, no, friend. You see, when He was moved with compassion, that compassion compelled Him to do something to reach those people for the cause of Christ.

And I'm going to tell you what the walking shoes of the local church is. The walking shoes, ladies and gentlemen of the local church, is compassion. Love with Jesus.

Do you know why we don't fill up our churches in the day and age in which we live? Do you know why people drive by the signs and the marquees of our buildings and why we can pass out a thousand and one gospel flyers? Why we can beg people to come to revival meetings and missions conferences and Bible conferences? Why we can beg young people to come fill up our youth groups so we can preach to them and holler at them? Do you know why people laugh at us when we go to the grocery store? Do you know why it is that we can't get people to come to the house of God? Do you know why it is when we go into our family reunions and we go to our family gatherings? Very rarely do we ever have an opportunity to bring up the grace of God. Very rarely do we ever have an opportunity to share Christ with other people. I'll tell you why, ladies and gentlemen, because we have been so busy about shoving the gospel down people's throats.

We have been so busy about giving people standards and giving people convictions that we have forgotten that if we are going to reach a lost and dying world with the message of the Word of God, it takes more than just the message to get to them. It's delivering that message in a proper spirit and in a proper

manner. And if we are going to win people for Jesus Christ in Troubled City and in Aaron and in Tennessee Ridge and in Clarksville and Dixon and the roundabout communities, we are going to have to have love with Jesus.

And the reason people are dying and going to hell is because we pay most sinners lip service. But they don't see any light. Let me read you something tonight that I wrote on a piece of paper that stirred me when I read it just a few weeks ago.

It's by Mr. C.H. Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, the pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle. When he was 20, you hear me? 20 years old, he was preaching to between 7,000 and 10,000 people every time he opened his mouth. I'm telling you, here was a 20-year-old young man who had the power of God upon him.

But at the end of this ministry, I'd like to read you something C.H. Spurgeon said. If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. If they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees.

Let not one sinner go to hell unwarned and unprayed for. And I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, that's exactly what we're missing in our local Baptist churches. We get up and we beat the pulpit and we tell people to be safe, and we get up and we run around and we pass our gospel tract and we beg people to be safe.

But if there's one thing our society does not see, it does not see a tear in our heart and weeping in our eyes when it comes to telling people about the Lord Jesus Christ. And if there's one thing we have lost in our churches, it is a heart of love. It is a heart of compassion.

And I do believe in being confrontational. I believe in preaching on sin. Hey, I'm against sin.

I'm against every bit of it. You say, why? Because God's against every bit of it. God's holy and God's righteous.

And I believe we ought to have standards. And I believe we ought to be holy. But you know what our problem is? Sometimes all we see is the long hippie hair.

Sometimes all we see is the bad clothes and the earrings all in their face. Sometimes all we see is the tattoos all over their body. Sometimes all we hear is the rap music or the country music or the rock and roll heavy metal music coming out of their car.

Sometimes the only thing we see is the wicked words that come out of their mouth. Sometimes the only thing we see is the Bud Light and the Michelob and the Budweiser that's in their hand. But what we fail to realize is that person lives that way because there's something deep within the inner recesses of their heart that's called sin, ladies and gentlemen, that has never been taken care of.

And if we're not careful, we will hate sin so much that it will cause us to hate sinners. Now you hear me tonight. I believe sodomy is a sin.

I certainly do. I don't believe it's an alternative lifestyle. I don't believe they were born with it.

I don't think it was in their genes. I think it's all in their stinking heart. They need to be saved by the grace of God.

You don't know a bunch of people that meet together down in Nashville and a bunch of perverts come together and you say, well, they're a church. No, you don't know a church full of perverts. You don't know a church full of sodomites.

You just know some people that meet together and say they're a church, but really they're not. Because according to the Bible, no sodomite, no professing homosexual is born again. But I'll tell you something, just as much as I'm against homosexuality, just because I'm against sodomy and I'm against lesbianism and I'm against that perverted, wicked, vile lifestyle, I'm going to tell you something, if we're not careful, we will hate their lifestyle so much that it causes us to hate sinners.

And I'd like to remind you, they've got a need, ladies and gentlemen, that need for sodomite is the same need you had when you got saved. It was the grace of God. And if we're not careful sometimes, I'm telling you, if there's one thing I hate in this world, if there's one thing that bugs me and gets my dander up, if there's one thing I could beat the pulpit about and shout and holler and yell, it's drinking and drunkenness.

I mean, you can call it booze, beer, wine, you can call it whatever you want to, friends, but I'm telling you it's wicked, it's vile, it's the worst thing that's ever been belched out of the bellies of hell. And I hate it. I've preached in the rescue missions.

It's destroyed my family. It's destroyed marriages in my family. I've got an aunt right now who's in hell because of a drunk driver.

And I'm going to tell you what, I hate the stuff with a purple passion. I know what it was like as a 15, 16-year-old teenager to wake up with my head spinning off and eyes rolling back at my head. I know what it's like to drink that trash and to be on that mess.

And I'm going to tell you something, I hate it. And it's wicked. And it's vile.

But if we're not careful, we will hate drinking so much. And we will hate drunkenness so much that we won't even lift our finger to help somebody in the rescue mission who's a drunkard. We won't even lift our finger to give somebody the Gospel who's got vomit all over their clothes.

And they don't smell like you do. And they don't act like you do. And they don't live like you do.

And if we're not careful, ladies and gentlemen, our heart of no compassion will cause us to damn more people to hell than if we never even told them about the Gospel before. And we have this idea that we can just shove the Gospel down people's throats. No, you cannot shove the Gospel down people's throats.

People want to see you live the Gospel. People want to see you love them. That's why your Bible says in Psalm 126, 5 and 6, They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, that was come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheep with him. Now, I'm going to tell you something about an evangelist. You may not know this, but you're going to know it tonight.

An evangelist is one of these guys who has a hard time with the issue of compassion. You see, a pastor can sit down with people and talk to them about their problems all day long. But not most evangelists, at least the ones I know, especially this one right here.

I don't have a whole lot of patience for people. I just tell them, hey, it's right, it's wrong, it's up and down. You know, it's good, it's bad.

And you either do it or you're not right with God and this, that and the other. And so an evangelist, by his very nature, has to be careful that he's not so confrontational that he doesn't learn to love and learn to have compassion. But I'm telling you something, ladies and gentlemen, did you know there will be more sinners saved by watching you and seeing your life and by the compassion that you have than will be that walk this aisle and come to this altar and get saved by the grace of God? In every church I preach in, there will be more people saved by the life of the Christians who love the Lord and who put the Bible sneakers on and who walk through life and have compassion and love and concern for people.

There will be many more people saved and brought into church that way than will ever walk down the aisle of a fundamental Baptist church and profess the Lord Jesus because compassion makes a difference in people's lives. There was a young man, the early 1900's, his name was John. John had a sister by the name of Samuel.

Sandra went to a little Baptist church across town. She walked about two and a half, three miles to get there. Walked down a little old crooked dirt road.

She got to this little old Baptist church and she went to Sunday school and she heard a lady Sunday school teacher get up and give the doctrine. Sandra's heart was breathed on as we preached on this morning by the Holy Spirit. Sandra went forward after the service there at Sunday school just before the preaching time and before the choir was to stand and sing their song.

She talked to that dear lady Sunday school teacher and that lady Sunday school teacher led that little girl to the Lord Jesus. Sandra went home that day and she was by herself and I think about this time according to my reading she was about 16 or 17 years old. She walked back to the house and that afternoon over Sunday lunch she was eating and her family noticed that she didn't eat too much and didn't ask her much about it.

In the next coming days it just seemed like she just kept slipping deeper and deeper into discouragement. Well, one Friday evening over dinner her daddy, her little brother John, her mother was there and they had several other children. Daddy finally said, Sandra, what in the wide world's wrong with you? Ever since you went to that church a week or so ago, man, you just ain't talking much and you ain't eating much and you ain't slept much and you just ain't done much of anything.

She said, I know. She said, I got saved just this past week, Daddy, and I know the Lord Jesus Christ is in my soul and I know He's in my heart to stay and I'll not lose my salvation, but I'll tell you, it breaks my heart to think that some of you are going to go to hell. And on Sunday, we're supposed to be having a big special day and I've been nervous all week about asking you to come to church, but we're having a Sunday school campaign down at that little log cabin Baptist church and I want to invite you guys to come.

And Dad said, I don't think I'll be going. And Mom said, no, I don't think I'll be going either. And little John was about 10 or 11 years old at the time and he lifted his head up off the table and he said, you know what, Sandra? He said, I think I'll go with you.

He said, I'll walk down to that little Baptist church with you. I'll go to your little Sunday school campaign. Just a little kid.

He got up on Sunday morning. He put his little old ripped blue jeans on. He didn't know much about clothes.

He didn't know how you're supposed to dress to go to church. He didn't smell real well. He kind of licked his hand and laid down his cow licks, you know, his hair just sticking up and discombobulated all over the place.

He still had his little eyes seeping junk there in his eyes before he got up and he was just kind of a little smelly old kid, you know, and they were poor and he didn't have a lot and Sandra did her best to save her dress. Every Sunday she wore the same one and she had it all creamed and all ironed out and pressed just nice and she tried to dress up for the Lord the best she could. And so she took the hand of her little 10 or 11 year old brother, little John.

And little John with that little log cabin baptized church that day and he sat in Sunday school and they had a substitute Sunday school teacher that day. That Sunday school substitute teacher came in there and she began to talk about John 3, 16 for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And she talked about the death and she talked about the burial and she talked about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And at the end of that service little John's heart was stirred within him and he walked up to that teacher as a 10 or 11 year old child and said, you know what ma'am, this Sunday school teacher you told us during your lesson that if God spoke to our heart and that if we believe that little black Bible that you was preaching from to come and tell you about the Lord Jesus Christ. Come and tell you that I wanted to receive Him and you know what, Miss Teacher, I'd like to receive the Lord Jesus. There was a lady that came over from the church building from their adult Sunday school.

She came to get her little boy out of that little log cabin Sunday school room and as she was getting her little boy out she looked over at little John standing over there and she told her little boy, she said, that's exactly the kind of children I don't want you playing with in Sunday school. That's exactly the kind of way I don't want you to dress when you come to church. And publicly humiliated little John right there in front of all the boys.

Right there in front of all the girls. Right there in front of all of those people. And little John's heart was hurt.

His heart was broken. That lady said, son, that's exactly why sometimes I don't let you come into the Sunday school class with the rest of the kids because those are the type of children I don't want you to be around. And that lady with a mean, mean tongue in her wicked mouth she turned that little 10, 11 year old boy and said, you know what little boy, you're not supposed to dress like that when you come to church.

You're supposed to give your best to the Lord. You're supposed to comb your hair and brush your teeth and clean your body and you're not supposed to wear your little britches with your holes in the kneecaps and that's all he had. And she said, you're not supposed to come to church like that.

That lady turned around and walked away. Little John walked over to his teacher and said, ma'am, I don't mean you any disrespect but I'm going to tell you something right now. I'm only 10, 11 years old but if I lived to be 100 years old I'll never darken the door of another church in my life.

I'll never come to another Baptist church. I'll never go to a Methodist church. I'll never go to another revival meeting.

I'll never go to Sunday school as long as I live. I will never go to church again. And John kept his promise in the 1920s.

John Dillinger was one of the most wicked men that ever breathed God's air. And he robbed and banked in Terre Haute, Indiana and all throughout Indianapolis. He murdered.

He was a rapist. He was a vile, wicked, ungodly man and until his death he kept that promise and he never went to church again. And John Dillinger right now is in the very fiery, flaming pits of hell simply because one rude, snotty Baptist woman didn't like the way a little bus did with bricks.

I'm going to tell you John Dillinger probably could have been one of the greatest evangelists that the world has ever known. Perhaps he could have taken the mess that we're in in America and pulled America out of their wickedness. Maybe he could have been another Billy Sunday, another Sam Jones, another C.H. Virgin and another D.L. Moody but we'll never know because John Dillinger is in hell because a lady had no compassion on somebody that was left to be desired.

You know our problem isn't in our local churches. Our problem is the same problem in the book of James in chapter number 4. In James, excuse me, chapter 5 we find out that a man comes to that local church and the Bible says he has a ring on. You read that there and it literally has the idea in the original that he was weighted down with rings.

He was a very rich man. Probably drove a Rolls Royce a Mercedes Benz a Lexus some real fancy fat cat rich type of a fella lake houses boat houses and everything you can imagine. And he shows up and James gives the analogy that they give him the best seat in the place.

And they give him a nice little leather stool and say man plop your feet up on here we won't preach to all who won't keep you along around here. All they wanted was one thing. They wanted that tithing envelope to go clink clank in the offering plate to the local church to give a little money.

But then a less to be desired skid row mission red light tin can alley district bum comes walking in the back. He has no gold on him whatsoever. He has long greasy stringy hair all the way down his back and he smells like a pack of cigarettes and a Bud Light liquor still.

They look at him and they say well I believe we've got a seat here in the back for you. And they sit that man down there in the back and that man sits there and in his heart he knows those people don't care anything about him. In his heart he knows if he could get out of that Baptist church bless God he'd never darken the door of another church except for that whenever again.

And know what James said when he put his analogy together. He said for God is not a respecter of persons and how dare we be a respecter of persons. Because I've got news for you.

We like to pick and choose who we think God ought to save and who God ought not to save. I want to tell you something. If God was in the picking and choosing business I promise you one thing He wouldn't have picked you and He wouldn't have picked me.

That's for sure. I mean the lowest of the low. Bless God the vilest of the vile.

And everybody in this room tonight who is saved it is because somebody touched your heart with love and with compassion and spoke a kind word to you. Maybe it was a mom and dad that loved each other and

they led you to Christ. Maybe somebody took you to a revival meeting like they took me to over at the Metro Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Maybe somebody read the word of God to you. Maybe somebody gave you a gospel tract. But you are here tonight under the sound of my voice saved by the very Holy Spirit of God on your way to heaven.

You've got a Bible in your lap. You've got a good suit of clothes on. And I'm going to tell you why.

Because somebody touched you and raped you and how dare we think how dare we think we can take the old gospel gun and shoot up the sinners and beat their legs off with a King James baseball bat and we can beg them to be saved, but yet they never see it in our lives. I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, the walking shoes of the local church is too small. Making a difference.

But notice what Jude said in verse 23. Boy, I like this part too. He said, and others.

See, there's some people you won't reach through compassion. There's some people that are hard-headed and stubborn and willful. And I mean, they are just big, fat morons is basically what Jude said.

You can't reach them through compassion. through love. So here's what you have to reach some people with.

And others, save with fear. What that means? Freak the devil out of them. Scare them absolutely positively to death.

Save them with fear, pulling them out of the fire. Now, by the way, that's the only text I had in the Bible to prove that we're supposed to preach hellfire, hot brimstone sermons. That'd be the very one right there.

He said not everybody is going to be reached through compassion. He said not everybody is going to be reached through love. He said there's some people they're so cold, they're so hard, they're so indifferent.

You've got to scare them absolutely to death. He said you've just got to get up and rear back and preach the Word of God and part their hair right down the middle and tell them they're lost, they're going to hell and they need to be saved. Now, no doubt, some people get saved in that fashion.

But you know what? He said what's really going to make a difference in the local church? What's really going to put this church on the map, spiritually speaking? What's really going to fill the altar with sinners and the baptistry with converts? I'm not a big walker. Robertsons enjoy it and they do it every morning, about 7, 7.30, something like that, walk a few miles a day. I don't really walk.

But you know, I know a little bit about walking. I remember when I was in junior high school, they wanted me to do track. And I didn't really care much to do track or anything like that.

But they told me, Coach Stanczak said, if you're going to do track, if you're going to keep up the pace, he said you don't run track in cowboy boots. I said I know, but I ain't going to show up in cowboy boots and nothing stupid. He said well you don't run in your dress shoes either.

People get on me all the time. You know, I'm always going through dress shoes. I go through about five, six dress shoes a year.

And you know, Brother Robertsons had the same pair of dress shoes not bothering him off the last 12, 18 years. I go through five or six a year. That's because I golf in them and go motorcycling in them and I climb up mountains in them and I just kind of do everything in my dress shoes.

Don't know why, that's just the way. But he said listen, you don't run track in dress shoes. He said you run track in running shoes.

He said you got to get this, you got to get this. So I went out and I bought these little Nike things in them. Had little puffy deals in them and I put them on, strapped them on and I put my little clothes on, my little outfit, little number on my back and we went out there and we ran and we ran and we ran.

We did it every day. Every day we'd run a little more. Every day we'd run a little more.

Every day we'd run a little more and we'd walk it off and run a little more and run a little more. But you know what? In order to run that, if I was going to be effective I had the right kind of shoes. I had to have the right kind of equipment.

I'm going to tell you something, if this church is going to be effective, if this church is going to win people for Christ, if we're going to fill this building up this week and see people saved and see hearts put back together and homes put back together and teenagers have the fire of God in them, I'm telling you, you're going to have to have the right equipment church, you're going to have to have the right shoes and the walking shoes of the church. People are going to have to find out that you love them. You see, you can talk to people all you want about Jesus, but until they see you love them, you can't do it.

You can't talk good to them. There's people in my family right now, I've talked to them, I mean, they're like talking to that microphone. They're about that dead.

They're about that cold. They've got about that much brain. They won't listen to a word you say.

But you know what, little by little, you show them love. Call them. Send them a thank you card.

Send them something for Valentine's Day. You just love them a little here, you love them a little there and pretty soon, man, their hearts will melt like butter on a pie next to your face. And I'm telling you, people far and near and by and large cannot reject the old-fashioned way of loving people that Jesus has.

Hey, when's the last time it is if you had a sinner at work and you said, hey, let me take that for you? You ain't got to pay for it? You just go to work. When's the last time Mr. Golfer, that he took a sinner's friend out and just paid for it? It's kind of a golf course. It's just love.

Hey, ma'am, when's the last time you went down to your little show and you just you just loved somebody? When's the last time you found out somebody was hurting you and you went down to the grocery store and sent 50 or 100 bucks on them and just lost the whole family and what you're doing? Hey, you try that sometime. Let's try it. You'll find that's your problem.

You just kind of flutter away and you say, I ain't going to spend those 50 bucks or 100 bucks on somebody I don't even know. You think I'm going to spend money on somebody? You think I'm going to buy them groceries? Hey, you just wait until you get the sickle, bless God, and you'll wish to God somebody go down to CB3 and buy you some groceries. You throw it out, buddy, it'll come back.

Cast that seed upon the water, not many days, you'll find it. Given it, shall be given. Good measure, shall be given.

shall be pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall be given to your bosom. For what measure you meet it, shall be measured to you again. Whatsoever you sow, that you'll also reap.

You sow compassion, you'll get compassion, but you sow a mean, cantankerous, bitter spirit and guess what? Everybody who talks to you is going to be mean, bitter and cantankerous because you will reap what you sow. I don't care who you are. I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, we've got a long way from the walking trees in the local church.

You know what the local church did in the book of Acts? I'll show you Bible sometimes. They sold things they had to take care of God's people within the church. Say, you really believe we ought to do that? Let's God just assure this quote was read out of wood.

I believe that. I believe you find out there's a brother or a sister that's hurting in the local church. Hey, it ain't Uncle Sam's responsibility.

It ain't the welfare agency. It ain't IRS's responsibility to buy them groceries. Let's God, it's the local church's responsibility to have compassion and to love that person.

And now, I'm not just talking about leading people to Christ with love. I'm talking about bringing particles back into the church with love and not looking down our big long pharisaical noses and say, well, I'll tell you one thing. If I was that person, I wouldn't have done this.

If I was that person, I wouldn't have done that. And we come to church and we gossip and we got a tongue from here to the interstate and we slay this person about sin in their life and slay this person and we talk to everybody about the problem but the person who's got the problem. We don't love them more than anything.

We love ourselves is what our problem is. We have no love in our heart and we have no compassion and Jude said, local church, if you're going to reach these people for Christ, if you're going to bring these wayward prodigals and these backstabbing people back into the fold, if you're going to fill up the choir loft and if you're going to have people to preach to on Sunday mornings, he said the only way you're going to make a difference in their life is if they see you love them, if they hear that you love them and they see your tears. Let me ask you a question.

When's the last time you've even thought about shedding a tear for somebody you know that's lost? We're the most cold, hardened, and indifferent society on the face of the earth. Nothing moves us anymore. Nothing bothers us anymore.

We don't have to We don't have to I remember when I first got saved I was living in a children's home in Murfreesboro You may have been here before but I remember when I was there I'd get up at night and I'd pray I'd pray for my dead man to be safe I'd pray for my dad to be safe I'd pray for my friends and the ill people I was dealing with at that time and I'd say I'd just weep for them and cry I mean just like that I could sit in a service when I was a teenager and I could hear somebody sing a song like Brother Robinson singing and I'd go to all the feasts I mean I'd slip a wig and I'd get to weeping and crying and snorting and crying all over the place I mean I could cry when I was a teenager probably up to about the time I was about 21 years old I could cry at the drop of a hand I didn't care what any service didn't make no difference

But you know all of a sudden something begins to happen We call it maturity of the Lord Stupidity is what it is We get to the place where nothing bothers us anymore We got this holier than thou attitude We walk around with our noses up in the air and if it was to rain we'd all drown in about five seconds for sure and we have the idea that it's something wimpy to cry We have the idea that if we're going to cry in a service then you know it must be the judgment of God If we're going to cry in a service then nobody's supposed to see us and you know we go off to services and we hear singing and we hear preaching and God paints a vivid picture in our mind of people that we know who are going to hell and we sit there and we think to ourselves well somebody else will reach them The preacher gets up and begs people to teach Sunday school He begs people to pick up the little snotty-nosed bus kids He begs people to go out here He begs people to do this He begs people to do that and the average Baptist sits in the fuses whether or not talking to me talking to all these people that are sitting around me and we have the idea that somebody else is going to get the job done You know what?

Your neighbor thinks the same thing Somebody else is going to get the job done Somebody else is going to get the job done and because somebody thinks that somebody is going to get the job done nobody gets the job done because we don't even care anymore It doesn't even bother us and if Angus could sit and holler and yell jump up on the pulpit and preach about flames and hell and it wouldn't bother some of us it wouldn't bother us at all All we'd be worried about is it wouldn't be hurry up and shut up so I can get home and watch the ball game You could care less if your boss is going to hell You could care less some of you ladies maybe that your husband is not here tonight going to hell Mister, maybe your wife is going to hell maybe your children maybe your grandchildren whoever it may be

and I'm telling you we know people left and right who are dying and going straight to hell and we will never reach them without compassion We're going to have to learn to love people We're going to have to learn to get over ourselves and get over our pride and humble ourselves before the mighty throne of God and say God give me a heart full of love God give me a heart full of compassion and give me a broken heart for sinners to see them converted by the grace of God Listen, I'm through and I don't know in this building who tonight needs this moment but I know I need it and that's why God told me to preach it tonight but I remember I was in Michigan and a preacher came to me and he said my Lord I've been a minister for a long time this is really one of the first revival meetings I ever had

I was still in Bible college and I had cut some classes I was doing some summer school and I cut about a week and a half two weeks of summer school to go to a revival meeting out in Michigan and this is later and when apparently this preacher told me he said but Lock he said I've been preaching for a long time he said you know every time I'd preach for the first few years of my ministry he said I'd preach and he said I don't care if I was preaching on Jesus he said I don't care if I was preaching on the crucifixion he said I could be preaching on tithing he said he said I could be preaching on the inspirational Bible he said I could preach on anything before I got through he said I'd start crying he said I'd phone a lot of people he said I'd just be preaching and start crying he said just

right in the middle of the sermon and I know people like that and they cry like that and so he said I'd just cry and cry and cry all the time he said one day that got to bother me the pastor he said that got to stir me up so bad in my soul he said I thought that was a weakness not a strength he said I thought that was kind of something that you know just shouldn't be there I thought maybe there was something in my life and so he said I started searching my life and he said I'll never forget he said I got in my closet one day in my office and he said I began to ask the Lord to quit making me cry by the time I got up in front of people he said I got sick of that he said by the time I get up there's that message start again cry and cry and cry he

said before I get through I got all done he

said so finally I got tired of that mess and he said I just pray God will take my tears away he said I got up in the pulpit the next Sunday he said I was dry as last year's virgin he said I got in the pulpit and I preached for the next few months and he said it was just cold and dead and formalitic he said there wasn't any life to it at all he said the more I preached and the longer I preached it seemed like the deader he got and he said after a while he said I got tired of that he said it seemed like the conversion started dropping off he said it seemed like we hadn't put anybody in the baptismal waters and stirred them up he said man the buses started rolling less people in he said it seemed like the school wasn't doing any well all of a sudden problems and sin started creeping up in

the churches he said after about six months of that mess he said I got tired of that he said I went back in the office one day and got back on my face and said dear God forgive me for my lack of compassion forgive me for my broken heart he said Lord I see now that those tears and that weeping is not a weakness of man but it's a strength from God and he said Lord give me the tears back and I'll never forget what that old preacher told me he said brother Lot when I got my tears back we got our ministry back I'm going to tell you the life blood of this ministry is awesome now I'm going to tell you what this community is tired of they're tired of churches just inviting them to come to church for the sake of having numbers so we can write the story of the Lord and tell them how many people

we've had in our revival this community and every community I preach in is sick of that they are sick and tired of just being somebody that sits on a pew and is a number so we can get up and holler at them and scream at them and say bless God look how many we've had to come to church Tommy Rot on that I'm going to tell you something friends we won't have to beg you to come to church we won't have to preach near as much against the liberals and the modernists and the new evangelicals if we're just one of the last few I'm going to tell you something I'm not a new evangelical bless God I know I'm not you ask the Robertsons buddy I preach on them birds all the time I'm not one bless God by the grace of God I never want to be one and when I become one of them new evangelicals and preach for

anybody just to preach for them when I become one of them liberals and one of them modernists I'm going to tell you something I'm giving it up I don't want to get involved in that mess I ain't going that route but I'm going to tell you something they got something we don't as fundamentalists you know why their churches are booming well number one because they ain't got no standards they ain't got no convictions but I'm going to tell you why their churches are booming and busting because they know how to meet people where they're at I don't exactly know where I'm going with this message but I'm going to tell you something the way we treat divorced people in our fundamental Baptist churches is wicked and vile we treat divorced people like they're crazy like they got leprosy and like they

can't do anything we treat divorced people in our fundamental movement like man you can't ever do nothing again I understand there are principles in the word of God about a man of God being a pastor or a preacher I ain't for none of these divorced preachers I ain't for one of these guys messing up on the east coast and going on the west coast bless God a preacher got one shot and when you blow it bless God you blow it but for people in our churches we almost have the idea that they got AIDS or they got cancer just because they've been divorced and they come into our churches and I'm thinking of a church right now that I preached in a couple of occasions and I got a revival meeting right now and for the past six weeks I've been praying and praying dear God give me the right words to cancel

this meeting because I don't mind being in a small church but I don't want to be in a small pastor and there's a difference between a small church and a small pastor and I preach for some small pastors and this guy belittles everybody and he's down on everybody and I'll never forget what he told me he said ain't no divorced person ever going to be a member of my church now excuse me pal we're going to have to learn to meet people where they're at and heal some broken hearts and some mended spirits and some wounded spirits because I'm going to tell you we're not living in the good old days anymore we're not living in the glory days where Memo and Papo stay married for 85 years bless me God we should be but we're not we're not living in the good old days when you turn on the television and

Lucy and whatever her husband's name Ricardo was sleeping in two separate beds we ain't living in that day no more we're not living in the grand old glory days we're living in days when people hurt when people go to Dr.

Bottle Stopper and Dr. Ragamuffin's office like crazy where people are strung out on Ritalin and strung out on Prozac and kids are killing each other in school and people are dropping out of school and people are having babies murdered and I'm telling you people just can't get along we're living in the wicked days and I'm telling you this ain't the glory days anymore and we're going to have to take the Bible and love people and nurture people and encourage people and bring people along in the Lord love you do not grow an oak tree overnight and I've got real problems with that because that's an advantage buddy Then we be the millions of people who have never heard a gospel message who are going straight to hell. You know what Jesus said? If you're going to reach Him, you're going to reach Him with compassion. And compassion that happens to be, ladies and gentlemen, the walk of healing.

The loving act. It's the walking scenes of the local church. And if this church is never going to be what it needs to be for the glory of God, you're going to have to learn, you're going to have to learn to love people who are going We won't give up.

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