Contending for the Faith (Numbers 16:1-5, 31-35 and Jude 1-25) 22-Nov-26

Numbers 16:1-5

Korah, Dathan and Abiram

16 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain
Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became
insolent **2** and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-
known community leaders who had been appointed members of the
council. **3** They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them,
"You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and
the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's
assembly?"
4 When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. **5** Then he said to Korah and all his
followers: "In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is
holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will
cause to come near him.

Numbers 16:31-35

31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart **32** and
the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all
those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. **33** They went
down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth
closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. **34** At
their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to
swallow us too!"
35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men who were
offering the incense.

Jude 1-25

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,
To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept
for Jesus Christ:
2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

The Sin and Doom of Ungodly People

3 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we
share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was
once for all entrusted to God's holy people. **4** For certain individuals whose

condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.
5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.
8 In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them.
11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.
12 These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.
14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

A Call to Persevere

17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will

follow their own ungodly desires.” [19] These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.
[20] But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, [21] keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.
[22] Be merciful to those who doubt; [23] save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

Doxology

[24] To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— [25] to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Please have your **Bibles opened** at **Jude 1-25.**

There is a sermon outline if you would like to take notes.

Let’s pray…

Intro/Greeting and Purpose (vv1-3)

Here we have a **short letter** from a man named **Jude**

[Slide-Intro]

V1 - Jude describes himself as ***a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.***

Jude’s name is literally “Judas”[Greek=Ἰούδας]. But to avoid connection with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus, most English translators have used the name “**Jude**.”

We know from **Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3** – that Jude is Jesus’ brother.

Still V1 – We are not sure who the people Jude is writing to or where they are located - but we do know they are **called** by God; **loved** by God and **kept** for Jesus.

That's a beautiful description of Christians – called and loved by God and kept for Jesus.

So this letter is addressed to us – as well!

And I love Jude's greeting in v2 – **Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.** We can ALL benefit from an abundance of God's mercy, and an abundance of peace with God and having an abundance of His love!

And then in V3 – Jude gives the **purpose** of his letter – he had planned to write to his readers about the salvation they share because of Jesus – but Jude felt compelled to write about something that is troubling him. It seems there are ungodly people in the midst of the Christians he writes to – and so these Christians have to ***Contend for the Faith***.

The Greek word for **contend** here comes from the idea of a wrestling match – so it has the idea of wrestling for the faith against challenging opponents.

And by "**The Faith**" – Jude means the essential truths of the Gospel – Jesus' birth, death, resurrection – and that Jesus is the only way to forgiveness and to Heaven.

Then from vv4-16 – Jude explains – **why we must contend for the faith!**

Why We Must Contend for the Faith (vv4-16)

[Slide-Why Contend?]

V4 – there are ungodly people- who secretly slipped in amongst believers and - **pervert the grace of God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus as sovereign and Lord**.

As a church we have to be alert to ungodly people slipping in amongst us and taking God's grace for granted and thinking being a Christian means "***God forgives me, so it doesn't really matter how I live – I can continue to sin because I am saved***"

But that is not true repentance!

And remember Jesus says in John 14:15-***if you love me you will keep my commandments!***

Such ungodly people will **remove the uncomfortable parts of the Bible**

They will accept the Bible's teaching about love, kindness and acceptance – BUT – reject the Bible's teaching on – sin, judgment, repentance, holiness, sexual immorality and the exclusive worship of Jesus alone.

These ungodly people won't escape judgment - Jude gives **3 examples** from the OT of God's judgment on sin and rebellion

V5 – 1st example - from Numbers 14:26–35 — Where Moses sent 12 spies to explore the Promised Land of Canaan. Ten of the spies gave a fearful report, causing the people to lose faith in God's promises. **They refused to trust God and wanted to return to Egypt**. As a result of their unbelief and rebellion, God judged that generation, telling them they would die in the wilderness and not enter the Promised Land.

V6 – 2nd example – refers to **angels who did not keep their proper position of authority but abandoned their dwelling place**. This happened in Genesis 6 – where fallen angels who were cast out of Heaven with Satan sinned and took human wives on Earth. This sin and the subsequent sin and rebellion of the people led to the flood in Noah's day.

V7 – 3rd example – Jude refers to **Sodom and Gomorrah**, whose people gave themselves over to sexual immorality and perversion. Their rebellion against God brought His judgement, when He destroyed **Sodom and Gomorrah** with fire and Sulphur (Genesis 19:24–25).

All 3 examples - serve as a warning of the judgement to come upon those who persist in ungodliness.

Next Jude says – v8 – that on the strength of their own dreams and their own spiritual revelations - these ungodly people – display **three ungodly characteristics:**

1st – they **pollute their bodies** – as they indulge in immoral behaviour, especially sexual immorality – rather than living holy lives!

2nd – they **reject authority** – especially God's authority and Jesus' authority – and the authority of the Bible

3rd – they **heap abuse on celestial beings** – this means they speak arrogantly and disrespectfully about spiritual things

In comparison to these ungodly people – Jude says – look at the Archangel Michael – v9 – when Michael has a dispute with the devil over Moses' body –

Michael doesn't presume to pronounce judgment on the devil in his own authority – but leaves it to the Lord to rebuke the devil!

Whereas v10 – these ungodly people slander whatever they don't understand – and act like irrational animals – and their behaviour will be their own undoing!

We have this sort of thing today where

People who dismiss Biblical teaching if they don't like it or don't understand it

Or People who confidently speak about spiritual matters – and say things like "God told me this is okay" or "I have my own understanding of Jesus, that's all that matters" or "It doesn't matter what the Bible says; I know I'm right"

Or People who allow their desires to control their behaviour – and say things like "My happiness is important to God" or "It feels right to me – it can't be so bad"

Or People who refuse to listen to correction – and say things like "you have no right to tell me how to live my life" or "I don't have to answer to anyone!"

So Jude gives another 3 examples from the OT – in v11 - of **how ungodly behaviour doesn't just affect the person themselves but affects and corrupts people around them! That makes ungodly people very dangerous!**

1st example – **they took the way of Cain** - Cain murdered his brother Abel and then went on to build a city where violence reigned. See Genesis 4:23-24! Cain's violent behaviour corrupted a whole city!

2nd example **– they rushed for profit into Balaam's error** – Balaam was a prophet hired by the Moabites to curse Israel. God would not let Balaam curse Israel, so instead Balaam told the Moabites how they could corrupt the

Israelites by the Moabite women enticing the Israelite men into making sacrifices to Moabite gods and engaging in sexual immorality! (Numbers 22-25, 31)

3rd example – **they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion** – which is the story from our OT reading this morning – from Numbers 16. Here a man named Korah – a Levite – led a rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron – and God sent fire to consume 250 men.

Sadly, "**Bad company corrupts good character**" (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Jude is not finished describing these ungodly people – in vv12-13 – he gives some pictures of what they are like when they join in fellowship in a Christian love feast. They seem all innocent – but:

1st – they are **shepherds who only feed themselves –** so they are self-centered!

2nd – they are **clouds without rain** – so like the clouds are empty – so is their teaching

3rd - they are like **autumn trees without fruit and uprooted** – so their teaching is fruitless!

4th – they are **wild waves of the sea** – they cause chaos like wild waves do!

But ultimately they ***like wandering stars for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever***!

The bottom line is these ungodly people cannot escape God's Judgment!

And Jude tells us this is something that Enoch, a descendant of Adam, prophesied – v14 – Enoch prophesied that the Lord is coming with His heavenly army – v15 – and He will judge everyone – and convict ALL the ungodly people.

For us today, we can take comfort in knowing that the ungodly will be judged by God – one day – they can't escape!

- Vladimir Putin will be held accountable for his abuse of power and aggression
- All dictators and oppressive leaders will face judgment
- All religious leaders who exploit people will face God
- All who exploit the vulnerable for financial gain – like human traffickers, pedophiles, corrupt business owners, drug dealers and dishonest financial advisers – will all come before God!
- All who deliberately thumb their nose at God's authority – will face Him!

Jude has gone to great lengths to explain why we need to contend for the faith – now in vv17-23 – Jude tells us – **How we are to contend for the faith…**

How We Are To Contend For The Faith (vv17-23)

[Slide-How]

1st – ***we are to remember the Apostles' warning*** - Jude says – vv17-18 - even the Apostles [John, Paul and Peter in 1 John 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:19; 2 Peter 2:1-3] all prophesied "***In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires***".

Jude says we will be able to identify these ungodly people – v19 – because they are **divisive** – and they are **spiritually dead!**

2nd – we are – v20 - ***to build ourselves up in the faith!*** We can only do that if we know God's Word. For example – some of us might have only discovered this week that Jesus had brothers and sisters – it's mentioned in Matthew 13:55 and

Mark 6:3. But if we don't read the whole Bible – we might not know these things!

3rd – still in v20 – ***we are to pray in the Holy Spirit***. The Holy Spirit works within us and leads us to pray according to God's will. Romans 8:26 says that the Holy Spirit even intercedes for us when we are too weak to pray! A faithful prayer life builds up our spiritual well-being!
It's important to spend time with God each day – so that we are spiritually nourished.

4th – v21 – ***we are to keep ourselves in God's love as we wait for Jesus to return*****.** We can do this by fixing ourselves on Jesus – who is the picture of God's love for us – and look forward to His return. As we wait – we must remember that this world is not our final home – remain faithful when we face difficulties and opposition – and not get distracted by the temptations of this world – and live in anticipation of having eternal life in Heaven with Jesus forever!

5th – v22 – ***be merciful to those who doubt*** – be patient with those who doubt – showing them scripture which assures them – they are forgiven and that Heaven awaits.

6th – v23 – ***snatch others from the fire [of Hell]*** – we should not be afraid to talk to people about sin, judgment and the need for repentance. If we are afraid of offending them by telling them about Jesus – they are going to be a lot more

offended when they wind up in Hell! The Good News of Jesus is literally a matter of – life and death – Heaven or Hell!

7th – v23 - ***we are to show mercy, mixed with fear – hating even the clothing stained by corrupt flesh*** -

What Jude means here is - we are to show compassion towards people who have become caught up in sin or influenced by false teaching.

For example: If someone in church begins following a false teaching or becomes involved in an immoral lifestyle. Rather than rejecting them, we seek to help them understand God's truth and lovingly call them back. However, we must be careful not to compromise our own beliefs or become involved in their sinful behaviour.

Jude also gives a vivid picture of the seriousness of sin – by saying "***hating even the clothing stained by corrupt flesh"***

In the Old Testament, clothing that had become ceremonially unclean was to be treated as contaminated. Jude uses this picture to emphasize that we should hate everything associated with sin.

For example: We might lovingly help someone who is struggling with pornography, but we must not tolerate, excuse or participate in the behaviour that has enslaved them.

With these **7 things** – **Jude shows us how to contend for the faith.**

My prayer is that these 7 things will help us in our Christian faith as we face ungodly people.

The Promise We Have (vv24-25)

[Slide-Promise]

Jude finishes with **two golden truths** – we can hang on to as we **contend for the faith** in v24.

1st - **we are not alone as we contend for the faith.**

V24 – We have Jesus – ***who is able to keep us from stumbling.***

Remember Jesus says in John 15:5 – ***Apart from Me, you can do nothing!***

And the Apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:13 **–** ***I can do all things through Him [Jesus] who strengthens me!***

And Jesus promised ***He would be with us to the very end of the Age*** (Matthew 28:20)

What a comfort it is to know Jesus is with us 24/7.

2nd – **we have Assurance** – ***Jesus is able to present us before God's glorious presence – without fault – and with great joy!***

You see – because we believe in Jesus – we receive His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21) – and so we are **right with God** and **approved by God** – because of Jesus.

So Jude is saying when God looks at us standing before Him – God actually sees Jesus and His righteousness – instead of seeing a sinful wretch!

Therefore we stand before God – **without fault – not guilty!**

Because – Jesus has paid the debt for all our sins – on the Cross.

And because Jesus has saved us from God's righteous anger over our sin!

And so, Jesus has brought us into a right-relationship with God and purchased a ticket for Heaven for all who believe in Him!

That's why we can stand there in **great joy!**

And so we can finish this morning by praying as in v24…

Thank you Jesus for saving us – all praise and thanks we give - ***to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.***