

1 and Done - Jude: Don't Fall For It - Part 1
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Jude is the last of the short, but power-packed letters we'll explore in this series. There's so much here that two weeks is necessary. Once again, false teaching is the problem Jude is addressing. However, unlike the formal theological attacks on the nature of Jesus we saw in 2nd and 3rd John, the false teaching for Jude's audience was more practical. It was "taught" by being "caught" in how people lived, acted, and behaved. The idea went like this, "Because God is all about grace, then we can sin as much as we want and we'll be covered. No judgement, no consequences, no worries!" Grace was being turned into a license for immorality, and the church was in danger of falling for it.

Jude's passionate and pointed **parenetic** letter exposes the pitfalls of this false teaching, and offers insight into exactly how his audience can keep from falling for it themselves. Jude points to sources his audience would have been very familiar with, both from the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as popular non-biblical works as well (1 Enoch, and The Assumption of Moses). Jude wanted to connect with his audience in the most effective ways possible.

Falling for free-for-all living is a problem in our day as well. The good news of God's grace is still often cheapened and abused as a license for sin. Jude's warnings and insights into how to keep from falling are as relevant to us now as they were to his original audience.

So, listen up for how to keep from falling down.

1. Confirm your identity - *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[a] Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.*

The absence of detailed description points to this being Jude, brother of James, brother of Jesus.

Called - Mercy

Loved - Love

Kept – Peace

In whom I am well- pleased, before going to wilderness

Listen to him – before going to cross

- Who and whose we are is foundational to our security in uncertain and tempting moments.

2. Clarify the objective together – 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.*

Sometimes celebrating what we have in common must be put aside when that common bond is threatened. There comes a time to struggle in protecting that bond.

Compelled – compress, bind, force ...

Urge – Come along-side for advocacy **you** plural – all ya'll

Contend – With commitment and skill, oppose what is not of the faith

The Faith – The gift of God's revelation of himself to humanity.

- "Faith is the divine **response**, wrought in man, by God" – Lewis Berkhof

Once for all **Delivered** – Given to us by God.

- "Faith is spiritual, the gift of God. You cannot command faith at will, faith is always something that is given-**inwrought** by God." – D. Martin-Lloyd Jones

Saints – Those transformed by faith.

Cross Country – Coach is talking to the individuals as a team. Each of them are instructed as one.

Our personal call to responsibility is given within the context of a bigger community.

- You aren't called to do what you do with only you. You are called along with other "yous"

3. Understand the present challenge. - *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.*

They may have snuck in on you, but not on God.

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- Grace is not a license to sin, but the means of power to overcome sin. "Grace means forgiveness and power to overcome sin, not permission to act immorally." – Craig Keener

"Find people today who are saying that because God loves everyone exactly as they are, then everyone must stay exactly as they are, doing all the things they want to do, because God is so full of generosity that obviously he wants them to do that. Find such people, and you've found the people to whom Jude is writing.

Find people today who are saying that Jesus is one religious teacher among others, one way of salvation among others, that there might as well be a variety of paths up the mountain of which Jesus' path is only one, that it's important not to make exclusive claims or we'll become arrogant; find such people, and you've found those to whom Jude is writing." – N.T. Wright

"They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good." – Titus 1:16

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them." – Matthew 7:15-20

- God is the only judge. God's people are not called to be judges. We are, however, called to be fruit inspectors. Pay attention to what is claimed and what is practiced. Fruit will always reveal root.

4. Look to the past with humble teach-ability. - *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.*

“You already know, I want to remind you.” Parenetic letter – Exhortation/Warning by way of reminder of what is already known.

“Delivered his people, but destroyed...” You are not alone and you are not immune. Don’t be naïve, be informed.

God’s people, Angels, Godless people; giving up God’s way and going their own.

- Israelites disobeying instructions to go into Promised Land.
- Angels who fell in rebellion against God.
- Sodom and Gomorrah – Pursued unnatural desires (angelic, male/male).

Each are examples of when you go your own way, you are go where that way leads.

- Direction, not intention, determines destination.

Hurricane Irma – Directions prep compared to Andrew. Learned the lessons of the past.

- Look to the examples of history and learn from them. You don’t break God’s principles. You only break yourself against them.

5. Look to the present with acquired and applied wisdom. - *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.*

In the very same way, (these people... 8, 10, 12, 16, 19) – repetitive applications to the present of past lessons – Don't make the same mistake!

Wisdom is the practical application of God's Word to our present decisions. Godly wisdom, applied today, results in solid footing when tomorrow becomes uncertain.

"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty."
– Proverbs 22:3

This wisdom is from Scripture and other sources that point us back to Scripture. (vv.9-10 are from a popular and familiar non-biblical story called *The Assumption of Moses*). He quotes 1 Enoch in vv. 14-15. Part of acquiring wisdom is to understand where to find it and how to apply it.

Way of Cain is the way of envy – Genesis 4

Way of Balaam is the way of greed. – Numbers 22

Way of Korah is the way of arrogant defiance of authority – Numbers 16

- The wise and foolish are separated by what they do with the truth given to them.

When Jesus says, I am the way, truth, and life, it is the greatest news of all because it is the way out of darkness, the way out of wayward and ignorant wandering, the way away from the destination of death. He can and will keep us from falling

*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.*

He is able ... will you fall for the lie? Will you follow him?

Questions To Ponder

- Discuss Jude's use of inspired material (Old Testament Scriptures), and non-inspired supporting material (1 Enoch and Assumption of Moses). Paul does this in Acts 17 (citing poets and Greco-Roman religious folklore), 1 Corinthians 12 (alluding to Aesop's fables and the Temple of Asclepius), and Ephesians 5 (Using the form of Roman Household Codes). Does it bother you that Jude, like Paul, points to Scripture as his source of authority, but also uses other material his audience would be familiar with? Why or why not?
- How does your answer to the question above impact the way you could use cultural products (literature, film, quotes from other books, art, etc...) to connect with people and point them to Scripture and Christ?
- In what ways do you see the same error of Jude's day present in our own?
- Why does Jude make such clear and striking statements about the identity of his audience? Why is our identity in Jesus so important?
- How do you differentiate between "faith" and "belief"?
- Calvary's vision statement and approach to ministry is to be a "People and place of grace." How are we as a church practicing biblical grace; rather than the cheap, abusive, licentious version of "grace" present in Jude's warning?
- Discuss Craig Keener's quote about grace, "Grace means forgiveness and power to overcome sin, not permission to act immorally."
- Talk about how a lesson from the past was either applied for your benefit, or ignored to your regret (whatever you're comfortable with). Why is it often difficult for us to learn from the past?
- Why do you think Jude used such strong ... and kind of weird examples?
- How does it strike you that Jude is basically telling his audience they are not immune to the same errors of the people of the past and those in their present situation? Is such a stern and sobering warning necessary?
- How do you respond to Jude's saying that the sin of Sodom was an act of pursuing what is "unnatural" (translated "perverted" in the NIV)?
- Talk about the definition of wisdom in this message. Do you agree with the distinction between wisdom and foolishness?
- How are you acquiring and applying wisdom in your own life?
- If Jesus is literally "wisdom from God" (1 Corinthians 1:30), then is your decision to his invitation an act of wisdom or foolishness?