

Calling All Christians

Jude 1:1-3

(preached Pine Grove 1/28/18; Sunday AM)

Introduction

If you could live in any era of history, which would you choose?

Some say the Wild West, complete with horses and guns and ineffective law enforcement...

Some say they would love to go back to the 50s when things were more simple and life moved a lot less fast...

Others prefer the age of exploration when men boarded boats in Europe and sailed to the New World...

I often wonder what it would be like to live in the time of Christ...

To be able to hear Jesus preach, and watch him heal while confronting the false teaching of the Pharisees...

Well, we all know that time travel isn't possible, so we find ourselves in 2018...

Now the interesting thing is this...

We live in a very unique era as well..

WE live in an age of incredible technology where life seems to move at a very rapid pace...

Yet, our era is not free from trouble..

Sin and unbelief leave their marks on every era of human history...

The Wild West was full of sin, and so were the 50s and every era of human history...

So we have much in common with times in the past...

Now we also should understand that God is fully aware of the progression of human history....

He sees both beginning and end and everything in between...

Which brings up an interesting question...

What age do we live in on God's timeline of history?

Well, we know this...

We are in the NT era, which is described as the church age...

The church age is simply the time between the ascension of Jesus and the return of Christ to rapture the church...

So the question is this...

How does God prepare the church to live for 2000 years or more knowing all the changes that will take place over that time?

Well, God know the human heart and he also knows that despite the changing times, some things about us never change..

So He inspires the NT, which is the handbook for all the church age...

Even if the church age extends for another 2000 years, the Bible will still be the guide for the church and for believers in this age...

Now the NT is an incredible work of God that begins with the gospels and details the life, death and resurrection of Christ...

Then we move to the book of Acts which describes the years immediately after the times of Christ...

Then we get to the letters of the NT like the book of Romans that gives instruction to the church at Rome...

And the same is true for 1&2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians...

And so what you see is a chronological progression even in the NT as the books move from the time of Christ, to the time of the church and then the NT ends with the book of Revelation which describes the time of the end...

So it is interesting that God places the book of Jude right before the book of Revelation...

Some have said that if Revelation describes the end of time, Jude describes the time right before the end....

And if that is true, what is time right before the end going to be like?

Well, Jude tells us that it will be a time of false teachers and false teaching...

Which should make sense to us since Satan's goal is to lead many people away from the faith before his time is up in the book of Revelation...

So, God inspired the book of Jude to come right before the book of Revelation to help us understand the need to fight for the gospel all the way up until the very end of time...

In fact, Jude is going to write in his introduction to the book that his purpose in writing is to convince his readers to contend for the faith...

In other words, the church age is vastly different from the age in which Jude wrote in terms of the advancements of civilization and technology and science and all sorts of things...

But the call to defend the faith hasn't changed at all...

In fact, it is more important today than ever to defend the true gospel against false teachers and false teaching....

Which is one of the reasons I chose to take us through the book of Jude....

You see, it seems to me today that Christian discernment is at an all time low....

In other words, Christians seem less equipped to spot false teachers than ever before...

Now there are a couple of reasons...

First, Bible knowledge is at an all time low...

People simply don't spend enough time in the Bible...

Their phones, their electronics, their hobbies, their jobs, their laziness all become things to draw them away from the studying of Scripture...

And a church ignorant of the what the Bible teaches is an invitation for all sort of false teachers to creep in...

Second, Christians have become conditioned by our culture to never offend anyone...

Therefore, the idea of calling someone a false teacher scares them to death...

So people just decide to let someone else do it and that allows false teachers to get a foothold in the church...

Third, technology has also made us less discerning...

And here is what I mean...

Anyone can call himself a preacher these days...

Just pay for a website or create a facebook page...

Put up a few scripture references, say a few nice things about Jesus, and people will begin to follow you and call you a man of God...

Even though you may not be biblically qualified to teach or even trained how to properly study and interpret the Bible...

Another reason I chose the book of Jude is that we just came out of the book of Revelation...

We just saw the things that are coming into this world, and people often ask...

What should I do now to prepare?

Well, the book of Jude gives us our marching orders because we are living in the days of the book of Jude...

Now Jude may have written in AD 68-69, but his call to contend for the faith extends until the church is raptured to heaven and the world enters the tribulation....

So, over the next few weeks, let us learn how to contend for the true faith....

Let us equip ourselves to spot false teachers...

Let us be motivated to help those people caught up in the false teaching and rescue them before it is too late...

For today, let us just dip our feet in the first 3 verses of the book as we look at...

I. The Author of Jude (1a)

Verse 1...

***1 [a]Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother
of [b]James,***

Jude begins his book like other books in the NT..

He begins it by identifying himself as the author...

This is quite the opposite of how we write letters today,
as we dont reveal who wrote the letter until the very end
of it...

Sincerely, Bud Moss

Thanks, Bud Moss

However, that was not the custom in 68 or 69 AD, when
this letter was most likely written..

Instead, people wood open their letter by simply stating
their name and then moving into what they had to
communicate..

Well, just who is this Jude?

Jude was a common name in the first century and even farther back in time..

The Hebrew name was Yehuda or Judah...

The Greek was simply Judas...

Now this presents a problem because there are a couple men named Judas in the NT...

In fact, two of the twelve disciples were named Judas...

One was Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus for a bag of silver...

That was the clearly not the author of this letter...

But there was another disciple Judas, who was often called, Judas not Iscariot..

This Judas was the son of James, but it also seems highly unlikely that he wrote this letter...

That leaves a third Judas, who is spoken of in Mark 6:3..

1 Jesus went out from there and *came into [a]His hometown; and His disciples *followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this

wisdom given to Him, and such [b]miracles as these performed by His hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of [c]James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?” And they took offense at Him. 4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in [d]his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.”

You see, Jesus had 4 half brothers and at least 2 sisters...

They were half siblings in the sense that Mary had other children by Joseph after the birth of Jesus...

Now, the interesting note about Jesus' brothers and sisters is that they rejected Him at first...

John 7:1-5 says this...

7 After these things Jesus was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. 2 Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. 3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret [a]when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” 5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

Can you imagine having an older brother who was calling Himself the Son of God?

It is no wonder that they even tried to call him mentally insane...

Now, it seems that Mary never doubted the identity of Jesus, but her children sure did....

Talking about a mama's boy...

I bet his siblings really hated him...

He was the first born but probably treated like the baby of the family...

And as such, his siblings rejected him..

Well, Judas was one of those siblings and so was James, who wrote the book of James....

So, how did these unbelieving brothers and sisters come to faith in their older brother?

The book of Acts tells us that it was after the resurrection of Christ that they realized that Jesus was indeed who He claimed to be...

And that is where it seems they all came to be saved..

Well, James became a leader in the church after he was saved...

He was the head of the church at Jerusalem and wrote a book of the NT...

We don't know what became of Joses or Simon, but we do know what became of Jesus' half brother named Judas because we now have a letter that he wrote that was inspired by God...

And we call that letter the book of Jude..

Now if he was named Judas, why don't we call this the book of Judas?

As you can probably imagine, the name Judas quickly became a name of shame shortly after Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ and had him arrested...

Even today, no one names their child Judas...

Therefore, Judas was shortened to Jude in the title of this book but also in the first word of the letter in order that no one would ever think that Judas the betrayer wrote this letter...

And so, here we have Jude, the half brother of Jesus identifying himself as the author of this letter....

But also notice that Jude makes no mention of that in his opening line...

Instead he calls himself the brother of James and the bond-servant of Jesus...

This is most unusual...

Why not call yourself the brother of Christ?

Wouldn't that give more weight to your words?

Wouldn't that bring a little fame to your name?

Consider our culture where people love to drop the names of famous people they know...

It doesn't matter if the famous people know them, what matters is that our culture gives fame by association...

Oh you took a picture with that person?

Well, let me hear about it...

Jude is the opposite of that...

Though he is Jesus' brother, he would rather be known as his bond-servant....

Now, let me take a minute here to talk about this word “bond-servant.”

That is actually not the best way to translate the original Greek word found here in verse 1...

The Greek word is doulos, which literally means slave of Jesus Christ....

When this letter was written in 60s AD, slavery was very common in the Roman empire...

People were sold into slavery quite frequently, and there was an active slave market...

Now the Scriptures are crystal clear, -slavery is wrong in any time and in any form...

You cannot own another human being made in the image of God..

In fact, the rightful owner of everyone is God, and to claim ownership of someone else is to take that person from God...

Unfortunately, the human heart is evil and slavery has existed all throughout human history...

And for that reason, the word slave has such negative connotations to it that even Bible translators stayed away from it....

Most often, they chose servant or bond-servant as a more respectable translation of doulos...

Some translations today are now using slave of Christ, which is the best way to translate the word...

And the reason for that is this..

We are slaves to Christ..

He owns us in every way...

He commands, we obey.

He sends, we go.

He speaks, we listen..

He has a need, we serve...

Every believer is a slave to the one who has purchased them in his blood...

Listen to Romans 6:20-23...

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what [o]benefit were you then [p]deriving [q]from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you [r]derive your [s]benefit, [t]resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You see, Jude understands this...

Jude sees Christ for who He is..

He is not just his oldest brother...

Jesus is his owner, his master, his Lord, and Jude simply exists to serve and obey Him...

And that is why, Jude doesn't describe himself as the bother of Christ, but rather the slave of Christ...

That is who he was, and that is who we are church...

Christ is our master and Lord and He owns us in every way...

Yet, He is not a hard master, but rather his yoke is easy and his burden is light...

Jude knew that and Jude celebrated that by describing himself as a slave to Christ and a brother to James...

Now, why have I spent so much time on this?

What is the importance of understanding who Jude was?

Well, first I think it helps us understand who we are hearing from in this letter...

Yes, we know that God inspired every word of what Jude was about to write...

But we also know that God is not going to override Jude's personality traits and gifts as he writes this short letter...

You see, Jude is going to call the church to defend the faith from false teachers...

He is going to describe the false teachers to us..

And in the process of doing both of those things, it may be tempting to think that Jude has a vengeful heart or that he is a fire breathing preacher who finds fault in everyone..

But that doesn't describe Jude at all..

He is humble enough that he doesn't even want to mention the fact that he is Jesus' brother...

He is lowly enough that the only title he wants is to be called a slave of Christ...

Jude is simply a man who has been sent by his Master to call others to the defense of the Master's name...

And like any good slave, Jude simply obeys...

Now, who is Jude calling to defend his Master?

Well, let's look at the second half of verse 1 and all of verse 2...

II. The Audience of Jude (1b-2)

*1 [a]Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother
of [b]James,
To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father,
and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 May mercy and peace and
love be multiplied to you*

Who are those in the world who have been called by
God, beloved by the Father, and kept by Christ?

Well, that is simply a description of the true church..

The true believers in Christ...

In other words, Jude is writing to the other slaves of
Christ....

But let's take a moment to see how believers are
described right here....

First of all, Christians are those who have been called by
God...

The Bible is clear that everyone is born a sinner and our
sins makes us like dead men...

And what can dead men do?

Well, they can't do anything but stay dead...

Yet God in his great mercy and love calls believers to life through the gospel..

Listen to Ephesians 2:1-5...

And you [a]were dead [b]in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the [c]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, [d]indulging the desires of the flesh and of the [e]mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead [f]in our transgressions, made us alive together [g]with Christ (by grace you have been saved),...

The reality of the salvation of all true Christians is that they were called from death into life by God Himself...

And Jude reminds us that the God who called us to salvation is now calling us to defend the faith..

But not only are we called, we are beloved...

Some translations say sanctified by God, but the word here is agapemenios, which comes from the root agape, which means love...

In other words, the church is called and also loved by God...

Now, why is God's love an important theme in the letter that Jude is about to write....

Well, the love that God has for us is a reminder of the love that we should return to Him...

Think of it this way...

Are you quick to rush to the defense of those who love you?

Absolutely..

Are you also quick to rush to the defense of those that you love?

Absolutely...

Well, God through Jude is going to call us to defend Him, and the great love He has for us and the great love we have for him should cause us to rush to his defense...

In my mind, there is a great irony here...

So many people purchase guns to defend themselves...

So many people would run and join the army to defend our country..

But very few have any desire to defend the name of God and his gospel...

Call our mama names and we may shoot you...

Call our country names and we may bomb you...

Call our God a name, and we won't say a word....

It is amazing that so many people have a greater love for country and family than they do for the God who created them..

Jesus said that if you love anything more than Him that you aren't worthy of Him..

So as Jude prepares to call the church to defend the Lord, he reminds them of God's great love for them, which should be returned in our great love of Him...

And our willingness to defend Him...

But not only is the church called and loved, the true believers that make up the church are kept...

Some translations say kept in Jesus Christ, and others says kept for Jesus Christ, but the idea is the same...

God preserves those who are truly saved..

He keeps them and protects them and ultimately delivers them to heaven...

This is the great doctrine of the preservation of the saints..

Those who are truly saved make it to the end because He who began a good work in them carries it to completion...

Now why is this important for Jude's readers to remember the fact that they are kept by Christ?

Because they will be contending for the faith with people empowered by satanic forces...

The battle for God's truth is not a war for the faint hearted because the devil will throw everything and the kitchen sink at you in your defense of the true gospel..

But here's our confidence...

Whatever the enemy does to us, he cant take us from the hand of Christ...

We are secure in the battle because we are secure in our God..

I may lose my physical life but I will never eternal life..

The war for the truth is tough but for those on God's side, there are no casualties...

To die in battle is to go to heaven...

That's a pretty good promise folks...

So Jude is writing to the church and as he calls us to contend for the faith, he reminds us that God first called us, God loves us, and God keep us...

And then in verse 2, Jude asks God to fill his people with mercy, peace, and love as we prepare for battle...

Now, dont overlook this prayer of Jude here because as we go into battle for the truth, we need mercy, peace, and love..

Let me reveal my heart here for a moment...

There is nothing that gets me so fired up than a false teacher...

To misrepresent the gospel, the word of God, and even God Himself is infuriating to me...

But what I need to remember is that these men who do this needs my prayers and my patience that come through love..

Now, that doesn't mean I can stand idly by while they lead people astray, but it does mean I should beg God to open their hearts to their error..

I should show mercy when they repent..

I should strive to be at peace with all men...

And I should extend love even to those who show no love for the truth...

Let me tell you folks, that is hard for me to do at times, and I am in constant need of Gods' grace here...

Look, false teachers should fire us up...

Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers in the temple..

Jesus called down curses on the Pharisees who butchered the word of God...

But guess what?

Jesus also showed mercy to a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who came to Him at night seeking truth...

The same is true of a repentant Jewish leader named Saul, who became our beloved Paul...

And guess what...

Even Jude was once an unbeliever in his own brother, but God showed him mercy and Jude came to faith in Christ..

May God fill me and each of you with these same qualities as we fight for the faith....

A final stop today is verse 3...

And we will only read it and make a quick comment before getting into it more fully next week..

We have seen the author and audience of the book of Jude, but what is the aim or purpose of Jude?

Well, Jude clearly states in in verse 3....

III. The Aim of Jude (3)

3 Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the [c]saints.

Jude wanted to write a pleasant letter to the church about the glorious salvation that they shared in Christ...

But the Holy Spirit changed his mind and he felt the need to write to the church calling them to defend the faith....

And if there was ever a need to fight for biblical Christianity, it was in Jude's day and certainly in our day...

And next week, we find out why that need exists...

Conclusion

For today, let me end with a few questions for your consideration...

#1 - Did you even know that there exists a false gospel, a false Christianity, and false teachers and teaching in the church today?

There are many people in our day who think that if it walks like a preacher and talks like a preacher, then it is a preacher...

But is that the case?

#2 - Could you identify false teaching and a false teacher in the church today?

What would be the thing or things to look for in a false teacher or even in a false message?

#3 - Do you love God enough to even care about false teachers and teaching?

So many people love so many things more than they love God....

So many Christians care about some many things more than they care for the truths of God...

So many people love sports teams, their country, their lives so much that they would fight for them at a moments notice...

Yet guess what?

Sports team lose, countries crumble, and lives end...

Yet God has called us to fight for the faith that has been passed down to us in the Bible...

However if we have little love for God, we dont go to battle, we simply let the enemy come in and take what He wants while we keep our Bibles closed and sit our our hands...

Church, there is a fight for the gospel all around you...

And if you have no desire to join the fight, I would examine if you truly love the God who is calling us into the battle...

Let us pray.