Contend and Rescue

Passage: Jude 11-25 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 261122

SUMMARY

Steve finishes Jude, reading verses 11-25. He reviews the three warnings of Cain's way, Balaam's error, and Korah's rebellion, then walks through the six metaphors for false teachers: hidden reefs, self-feeding shepherds, waterless clouds, fruitless trees, wild waves, and wandering stars. Enoch's prophecy and the grumblers, malcontents, boasters, and scoffers show the ungodly Jude warned about. Jude then turns to the beloved: build yourselves up in the faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, have mercy on the doubting, and snatch others from the fire. Steve closes by extending his fighter illustration: cut away what weighs you down, condition daily with scripture and prayer, find a coach, and train as if fight night is near.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Jude names the marks of false teaching: preference over God's word, ministry for gain, and rejection of godly authority. Test the voices you follow against scripture.
- Jude calls his readers beloved even while warning about the ungodly, so be gentle with the people you love and plain about the teaching that misleads them.
- Keep yourselves in the love of God by building up your faith in scripture, praying in the Holy Spirit, and waiting for Christ's mercy.
- Rescue the misled: show mercy to the doubting, snatch others from the fire, and show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.
- Contending takes daily training: cut what weighs you down, condition in the word and prayer, find a coach to disciple you, and never think you are too old or too weak to begin.

Scripture Reading: Jude 11-25

All right, we are going to start in, we're going to jump back to verse 11, and then we're going to read through the end of the book. It says, Woe to them, for they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. These are hidden reefs at your love feasts as they feast with you without fear. Here, shepherds feeding themselves, waterless clouds swept along by winds, fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted, wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame, wandering stars for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever. It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh of Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in an ungodly way and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against them. These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires. They are loudmouth boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage. But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you in the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions. It is these who cause divisions, worldly people devoid of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt. Save others by snatching them out of the fire. To others, show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Father, we thank you for this time that we get to come together. Father, we just bless this time together. And as we go through your word, Father, just the warnings that Jude has given us, and then the commendation that he gives us, the encouragement that he gives us to just stay true and stay the path. So, Father, as we go through this, just help us each to be edified by it. And, Father, let each and every bit of it be your words and not mine. Father, we ask all of these things in your Son's name. Amen. Thank you, guys.

All right. Really quick, we're just going to go back through that last little bit there, because it seemed weird to just start with these are hidden reefs. So, I want to jump back to the three warnings of false spirituality that he talks about.

Review: Cain, Balaam, and Korah

And he talks about Cain's way, Balaam's error, and Korah's rebellion. And we talked about how Cain brought an offering of his own. It wasn't what God had asked of him, so God rejected it. And sometimes that is what we're talking about when we say, well, I'm going to do this, but it's not what God is asking of you.

And then Balaam's error was, Balaam was a prophet for hire, and Balaam tried to make things work. He was told, hey, you need to do something against what the Bible tells, or against what God is telling you to do. And Balaam's like, well, yeah, I could probably do that. I can make that, I'm going to figure out, finagle my way into doing that so that I can get paid.

These are ministries that are run more like a business and not a business of souls and more of a business for gain. And then Korah's rebellion. Korah led a rebellion against Moses, arguing that Moses had no special authority over them because they were all God's chosen people. And we just talked about how that was not okay. There's a structure that God sets up. There are people that are more accountable to God for the things that are done. And as the pastor and as the leadership of church, we are those people.

Six Metaphors for False Spirituality

And now we're going to get into these six metaphors that he gives us for the false spirituality.

And he tells us these are hidden reefs at your love feasts as they feast with you without fear. These hidden reefs. He's giving a metaphor here for a ship sailing into port. They're ripping apart the churches and the congregations, dealing unseen, catastrophic damage before anybody realizes what happens. This is the kind of leadership that he's talking about here. The people that hide behind a face of righteousness. And in the background, all they're doing is tearing things apart. The second one is shepherds feeding themselves. These are leaders who care more about themselves than they do about their flock. Selfish people that are doing things in the position that they're in for the gain of themselves.

Waterless clouds. These are empty promises and unfulfilling leadership that leaves the congregation parched for spiritual nourishment. Fruitless trees in late autumn.

Extravagant outward appearance, but no inward spiritual life. We look at the trees outside right now. They're beautiful. Their leaves are changing colors, but we're past the point of there being fruit on the trees. There's no fruit. There's nothing other than just outward appearance.

Wild waves of the sea. This is unorganized, spontaneous leadership with no spiritual direction. Just flying by the seat of your pants. And, well, we'll make it work. We'll figure it out. That's not good organized. It's not what God wants. God wants us to be organized. God wants us to be thought out.

Wandering stars. This is compromised leadership, leading the congregation astray. Wandering stars in their day is actually what we nowadays would call the planets. These are the, they're not in the same place every year that all the other stars are. These are the stars that then when people are navigating, they looked at the wrong one and they get led astray. These, that's what he's talking about, this compromised leadership.

Modern Examples

It's not all that out of the realm of possibility to look at each of these and think that we know of a congregation or a person or something or someone that fits the bill of at least one of these. You can hop on social media for any point, any period of time, and you're bound to come across some kind of modern, real world example of this. And it really doesn't take much looking. There's a lot of people out there that are half-baked people leading God, leading people away from God because they're using the word Jesus and the word God, but they're not at all doing what the book says. These are the kinds of people, I don't know if you guys follow or keep up with much of anything going on, but there's a guy named Michael Todd. They anointed him this week as an apostle.

That's not, and this guy, if you've, if you, it doesn't take any, any amount of looking to realize that this guy has no idea what he's talking about when it comes to the Bible. That he has no clue what the Bible actually says. He fits the bill of a lot of these. He's got a huge following of people. He's got a lot of money, but he does not offer anything spiritual. Nothing at all. There are a multitude of instances where we see churches compromised by ungodly leadership. People thinking that they're being innovative and creative in their approach of the gospel, but all they're doing is purveying a cheap version of the gospel all for the sake of entertainment. Like any powerful, predatory animal, beautiful from a distance, impressive from a distance, but once you get up on it, once you get close, dangerous. It'll tear you to pieces. This is the kind of warning that Jude is giving. Avoid places and people that are not leading you to a deeper relationship with Christ.

Jude loved the church enough to call out the people who were praying on it for their own gain. He knew that maintaining the purity of the scripture was vital to the health of the church. He didn't sit back, stay silent, let people do what they're doing and think, well, God will take care of them. No, he called out the wolves and warned against their schemes. He called out the people that were leading

people astray. He knew that false teachers were creeping in. He knew that they were using the right words to deceive and garner a following, but then twisting the word of God into an ungodly, powerless gospel for their own gain.

Verses 14-16: Enoch's Prophecy

In verse 14 through 19, we see this is the second case where Jude uses an extra-biblical reference. In verse 9, he talks about Michael contending with the devil for Moses' body. And here we hear from the book of Enoch. And it's Enoch chapter 1, verse 9 that he uses here. And he says, Enoch was the seventh from Adam. So this is also Noah's great-grandfather, for those of you that didn't know this.

And then Hebrews 11 tells us that God took Enoch up to heaven and he never tasted death.

Now, keep in mind, since he is Noah's great-grandfather, this is pre-flood. There's nothing new under the sun. This was happening pre-flood. It's still happening in Jude's time. It's still happening today.

The early church considered this book a historical writing. And Jude uses this quote to emphasize the ungodliness of these false teachers. He uses the word ungodly four or five times. I can't remember what I counted. Five times, I believe, in this one quote. He's very repetitive with the word ungodly, ungodliness.

And it says that in his quote, he says that he's going to execute judgment and convict all the ungodly of their deeds. Now, when we talked about convict the last couple of months as we went through Galatians, we talk of convict in the sense of leading somebody to repentance. The way he's using the word convict here is for judgment and punishment.

This isn't a, we're going to turn them around. These are people that have decided this is their livelihood. They are going to stay ungodly people. They are going to avoid the true gospel.

Committed in ungodly ways. He says that they have done deeds of ungodliness and committed them in ungodly ways.

These, God tells us in Proverbs 6, 16 through 19, that God hates these things. All of the things that he's talking about here, all of this ungodliness, all of these things are the things that these people were doing.

Dividing people, doing it for gain, and just everything about it was against what God wanted for them. Harsh things spoke against God by ungodly people.

That's what he says there at the end. Ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

And then as we get into 16 through 18, we see that there's examples of these ungodly people speaking out against God.

We've got a list here.

Verses 16-18: Grumblers, Boasters, and Scoffers

Grumblers, malcontents, loudmouth boasters, and scoffers. Grumblers, complainers. Think of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness.

God was providing them, and they complained, nonetheless. God was providing for them. God was caring for them. God was taking care of every one of their needs. But, well, manna's nice, but we'd really like some doves. We'd really like some meat. And, oh, well, you know, this is nice, but we'd really like this instead.

People that can't be satisfied. These are people that are unsatisfied with everything that other people do. People that are unsatisfied in everything, but they're too lazy, too unskilled, and unwilling to do anything other than complain about it. Just complain.

The next one is malcontents. These are miserable people. These are the types of people that are unsatisfied with themselves. These are the types of people that aren't happy with their circumstances, so they look for a way to escape reality and things that make them feel better. That's why he says they follow their own sinful desires. These are the kinds of people that escape reality through anger, escape reality through alcohol, drugs. They're malcontent. They're discontent with their own life, so they have to find a way to be okay with themselves. Loud mouth boasters. These are proud, arrogant, loud people. These are the kinds of people that are so insecure in themselves that talking themselves up to others and separating themselves from anybody who stands in their way is how they make themselves feel better. Their insecurity causes them to be intimidated by somebody that has true conviction, somebody that is willing to stand up to them, and somebody who is willing to confront them when they say something, they shy away from it, and they just want to trash talk somebody at that point. He says that these are the people that show favoritism. Well, when we went through James, we talked about how partiality is a sin. Thinking of somebody differently than you think of somebody else is not okay.

They show favoritism to gain advantage. They separate. They divide. They take the people that they want to follow, and they separate and alienate everybody else. Number four, scoffers, naysayers, doubters, cynics, whatever you want to call them.

These are the people who don't have time for God. These are the types of people that find Christianity to be antiquated or incompatible with their life. So, they talk down to the people who have a true and real relationship with Christ. Well, I just don't. It's just not for me. That's not the thing. What do you mean your life is better because you have Jesus? I don't understand what that means. That's scoffers.

It says that they follow their own ungodly passions. They would rather spend their energy arguing and refuting your worldview than they would just accepting it. They would rather argue with you about it. These are the types of people that look for anything other than God for fulfillment. They would rather trust and believe in a man-made description of what rock they should rub on their forehead to balance their chakras. These are the kinds of people that justify the way they act and the way that they are because they're zodiac sign. These are the kinds of people that take the Bible, throw it out the window, and make themselves to be someone they're not through the actions of themselves. Not through the actions of what God is calling them to do. And he tells them there in verse 17, remember, you've been warned about these things from the very beginning. Verse 4, he tells them, long ago these were designated for condemnation. These kinds of people are going to come around. And he tells them, the apostles and Jesus warned you of these things, and we see that they're happening. They weren't wrong.

Verse 19: Those Who Cause Division

Then verse 19, he says, these are those that cause division, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. These kinds of actions and speech from so-called Christians lead to fighting among the body of Christ. These are the kinds of people that want to divide, the kinds of people that want to take the attention off of them, the kinds of people who want to garner a following, but they want the following of the right people. They want the following of people that they want.

And then we get into the commendation.

The Commendation

Starting in verse 20, he tells them,

This is where he starts, where in verse 3, he told them to contend for the gospel, or contend for the faith. Jude has spent the majority of this letter warning about and pointing out the destructive paths of false teaching leading some astray.

He changes his tone here, and in these final verses, he gives some encouragement to the rest who stay on the correct path and to be on the lookout for these false teachers and for those that are being led astray by them. Throughout the letter, Jude refers to his audience as beloved. Beloved. Jude has a deep love for these that he's writing to. He wants to establish that he has their well-being at heart.

He calls them beloved, but he also has harsh words for the ungodly people leading them astray. There's a duality of what he's talking about here. He's very kind and gentle to the people he's talking to, but he's very harsh and very real about the people he's talking about for them to avoid.

Verses 20-21: Build Yourselves Up and Keep Yourselves

So how do we train ourselves up to contend for the faith like we talked about last week? How do we train ourselves up to do what Jude called us to do in verse 3?

It says, Building yourselves up in the most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.

You guys probably get tired of me saying this because I say it all the time. Spend time in the Word. Spend time in prayer. That is the best and greatest way to build yourselves up in holy faith.

And he says praying in the Holy Spirit. He doesn't say just in prayer. He says praying in the Holy Spirit. This is praying according to the leading of the Holy Spirit, not your own desires or agenda. This is you being prayerful for what God has in store for you. The outflowing of that is to keep yourselves in the love of God. He says keep yourselves. Guard yourselves. By strengthening your doctrine and knowledge of God. Do so prayerfully.

Persevere with the hope in Christ's return and eternal life with him. It's where he gets there at the end of that where he says keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ who leads us to eternal life.

That's where he says this is what you need to do for yourselves.

Verses 22-23: Rescue the Misled

Then he points outward and he says, okay, now what do you do to rescue the misled? How are you supposed to do that? He's telling you, okay, you're guarding yourselves. Now you need to go. You're on a rescue mission. You are the ones that are going to be bringing these people back. How do you do that? He says have mercy on those who doubt. Don't condemn someone who's been drawn away by

false teaching, but it's our job to show them the love of Christ and guide them back to the truth. It is up to us to lead them back. We do that prayerfully. We let the Holy Spirit do the work, but we are the ones that are there calling, loving.

It says save others by snatching them out of the fire.

Know the truth and be able to accurately and effectively share the truth with others. Every person who doesn't have a true relationship with Christ is bound for an eternity to hell. We are the rescue party, the beacon of truth and light in a world filled with lies and darkness. It's up to us. With the help of the Holy Spirit, with the help of God, we are the ones that should be out sharing the gospel, snatching people from the fire, as he says here. I love that illustration, because that's exactly what it is. That's exactly what it is.

To others, show mercy with fear. He says with fear. You will encounter people who will be unrepentant and perfectly okay with their immorality. They've decided what they've decided. They were once part of the church, as Jude is talking about here, but they have followed these false teachers, and now they've fallen hook, line, and sinker for what they believe, and they're okay with it.

He says show mercy with fear. We still need to love them like Christ. We still need to show them mercy, but we need to do it with fear, so that we aren't also influenced toward the immorality of those that we're trying to share the truth with. We don't want to... We're supposed to go into the darkness, but we don't want to become part of the darkness.

He says hating the garment stained by the flesh. Hate the sin. Hate all that's connected to the sin, but love the sinner. Treat them with love and mercy, not hate.

Verses 24-25: Doxology

And then Jude concludes with a short doxology, a short hymn or text praising God. He says to him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present blameless before the presence of the Lord with great joy. God will keep you safe, and God will want to bring you into the presence of his glory with great joy, he says.

And then he finishes it out and he says, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen.

It's pretty... pretty rich with some theology and some doctrine and just two short verses.

Contend for the Faith: Train Like a Fighter

So what do we do with this short book? It's 25 verses. There are chapters of the Bible that are longer than this.

What do we do with it?

He tells us in verse 3 that we are to contend for the faith.

Our ability to contend for the faith is only as effective as our knowledge of that faith.

Contending also implies that there will be opposition. You don't contend against nothing. There is something you're contending against.

Jude is encouraging them that in the face of a rampant moral deterioration in the world, our resolve in our faith and our conviction must be that much stronger. We need to be training up to contend.

If you're serious about standing with Christ, it will require more than you just sitting in church once a week, looking at your clock, wondering what you're going to have for lunch. It takes daily, daily dedication, determination, and discipline. You won't make a very good contender without a lot of sacrifice, practice, and passion.

You're just not. If it's something you don't want to do, you're going to do it half-heartedly. So, if it's something you want to do, do it. Do it well. Last week, I gave you guys a little bit of an illustration of like an MMA fighter or a boxer when we talked about contending. So, I'm going to just keep fleshing out that illustration for you guys, and I want you guys to just hear me out when I say that this is what each and every one of us needs to be doing.

In boxing and an MMA, there are different weight classes. In order for you to make it into a weight class, guess what? You have to cut things out of your life that you enjoy to be able to make it into a smaller weight class. You have to cut out the things that you enjoy doing. I had buddies that wrestled in high school, and they'd sit at lunch, and you'd be eating, and you're like, hey, what are you going to have for lunch? Like, oh, nothing. I've got to drop eight pounds before tomorrow afternoon. Like, what do you mean? Like, no. No thanks. That's not the kind of sport for me. Like, but we have to be willing to sacrifice. We have to be willing to cut things out of our lives that we know. But you know why they did that? Because they loved wrestling. It was something they really wanted to do. It was something they were passionate about. I wasn't. So I thought it was stupid. I was like, why would you not eat? That is not, that's what I want you guys to understand, that if it's something that you truly, truly want, if it's something that you really want in your soul, then you are going to be willing to get rid of the things that are weighing you down.

We mentioned that last week. What are some of the things that you're taking in that you really need to cut out of your diet? I've challenged you guys to be aware of the type of preaching you were listening to, the podcast you were listening to, the music you listen to, the shows you watch. What are you putting into your body? What are the things that you are taking into your soul that you don't need to be putting in there? Number two,

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Condition Yourself and Find a Coach

you don't go into a match without proper conditioning, strength training, and practicing of techniques. You're not going to just walk in there off the street and expect to be a very good contender.

The things that we do with our daily lives, like our time in scripture and prayer, is the conditioning and equipping that we need to be able to contend for the faith.

You're not going to be able to contend for the faith if you don't know what you are contending for. Know it. Spend time in it. Get comfortable with it. So much so that it's just second nature for you to talk about it. It needs to be first nature for us to talk about it.

Number three, find a good coach to help train you properly. Find somebody to disciple you. Find somebody to walk alongside you in this. Find somebody that is more seasoned to train you up. Check their track record. If they've got a losing record, probably not the kind of person you want training you. If they're not a very good Christian, probably not somebody you want discipling you.

Accountability. Keeping you on track. These are the things that we need in order to train ourselves up.

Train Every Day

Number four, train every day like fight night is right around the corner.

Don't put things off.

Don't think, oh, well, you know, next week I'll start reading my Bible more regularly because guess what? No, you won't. Trust me. I've been there. I'll wait. Monday seems like a good round day to start doing this again and then you don't do it and then you don't do it again the next Monday and then, oh, well, I'll just do it Wednesday and then you don't do it Wednesday. No, don't put it off.

You never know when you may need that training or that conditioning outside of any other time. you might find somebody that's just hurting that just needs to hear the truth. It may not be somebody that is that is drawing people away or anything like that, but it may be somebody that is just struggling on their own. You know what? Those are the kind of people we need to come beside and say, hey, let me show you the way.

Number five,

Never Too Old to Begin

don't ever think that you are too old, too weak, or too out of shape to begin, continue, or get more serious about your training.

Remember, time is running out. We're running out of time. You don't know when you're going to need it.

We need to be snatching as many people from the fire as we can before that time runs out. We need to be doing our part.

So again, it is up to us to train ourselves up to contend for the faith, to defend what we believe.

And nowadays, there's a lot of stuff out there that is antithetical to the way that we believe. There's a lot of stuff out there that is the complete, complete opposite of what we as Christians hold true and dear.

We need to be ready to fight at a moment's notice.

Be ready in season and out of season, as Paul tells Timothy. Always be ready to give your testimony to somebody else. always be ready to fight when somebody wants to stand against God.

So that's the book of Jude, guys. This is one of my favorite books and I just really want you guys to hear what I have to say there and just really take that into consideration. Think of the things that you need to cut out of your lives. Think of the things that you need to be doing to be better and more equipped to go and share the gospel with others.

Closing Prayer

Father, we thank you for this time together. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the encouragement that it is. Father, the conviction that it is. And Father, we just thank you for the authority that it has.

It is the truth. And Father, when we can embrace that, Father, when we can believe that and know that and abide in that, Father, that is when we will become the people that you want us to be.

Father, I pray for each and every one here that if they don't know what that looks like, if they don't know what it feels like to be one of your chosen children, that if they don't know what it is to be loved,

kept, and called, as Jude tells us at the beginning of his book.

God, we know you're calling because if you weren't calling, we wouldn't be here right now. You wouldn't be in this room if God wasn't calling you.

So, Father, we love you. Father, be with each and every one of us as we go out this week. Father, help us to shed the things in our lives that we do not need, that are not good for us. Father, the things that weigh us down, and Father, help train us up to contend for the faith.

And we ask all of these things in Jesus' mighty name. amen.

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