



**“...but you,  
beloved...”**

**by Pastor Tim Dodson  
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in Menomonie, Wisconsin  
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*17 But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18*

*how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh. 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present [you] faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, [Be] glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.*

The Great Wall of China is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It stretches over 4,000 miles (6,400 KM) and was built to protect China from the barbaric hordes to the north. The designers of the wall made it so high that it could not be scaled, so thick that it could not be penetrated, and so long that no one could go around it.

Yet, during the first hundred years of the wall's existence, China was successfully invaded three times without the wall being climbed or breached. The problem wasn't the wall – it was the gatekeepers! In each of these invasions, the barbarians simply bribed the gatekeepers who opened the gates, so the enemies just walked right through. This historical concept reflects a well-known reality: while physical fortifications can be virtually impregnable, human failings frequently undermine their defenses. Clearly, a wall is only as strong as its gatekeepers. We are seeing this reality manifest in both the greater church realm as well as the current political realm!

No matter how strong we may feel, we can never forget that our enemies will find points of entry if we are not continuously watching and alert. There will always be attempts to bribe or seduce us so they can break through. We must not allow the “barbaric hordes” to invade our lives by failing to keep careful watch at these entry points –our integrity and our authority depend on the security of our gates!

Having warned us about what will become of false teachers (vv. 5–16) Jude now speaks concerning the fact that their existence was foretold by the apostles (vv. 17–19). He goes on...in light of this reality, to call us to contend actively in paying close attention to the building up of ourselves in light of such an enemy (v. 20). For many of us, it is “church as usual,” and that will not suffice in 2026.

Jesus...speaking concerning the parable of the soils ...in reference to the kingdom of God... warned us of such in Matthew 13 saying;

*The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. 20 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. 21 But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. 22 The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. 23 The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!*

I have witnessed this parable more and more as a reality in the church world we live in today. The greatest heartbreak is in that reality “...*those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems...*”

Jude warns us to “remember who gave the Word.” Not just Christ, but yes even the apostles and their writings. Remember our roots. Plant your feet in the authentic and historical scriptures because God is the “same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8) and He “never changes.” (Malachi 3:6) When we walk through this life as a believer, we should now and forever be asking repeatedly, “Is this what the apostles taught?” It will never be easy. It will require our personal “striving.” Luke 13:24 *“Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”*

The author of this letter...Jesus’s half-brother Jude... had carried on in length over the first half of this letter. He warned the reader about who these guys were and how they would act... therefore, *how we would know them*. There seemed to be a very real call to arms, as well as a serious warning about what would happen if they failed... if **we** failed. Jude had given us the traits of these guys... their behavior and motivations. Now he is going to focus on us...on our part...on the defenders of the righteous gospel as well as the faithfulness of the local church. Because, once again, the walls are only as strong as the defenders who stand in the breach. We are to be different than the world. We must be strong to hold to God’s way and not let the enemy in the gates. Thus Jude speaks... *“but **you**, beloved.”*

Jude warns of the mockers of Christ that would rear their heads “in the last time.” We need to firstly realize that **we are there**. This is the “last time”... the “last days.” This is not future for us; this is today.

What can **WE** do? For indeed it seems that many of these things are up to us to engage in. Jude instructs us...the “beloved”... to firstly, “remember.” To remember the words that the apostles taught us...remember the authentic scriptures and therefore the instructions of Christ for all of this stuff. When we “remember,” we are “equipped.”

We are to “build ourselves up.” Diligently seek to grow stronger in knowledge and wisdom through the scriptures and the exercise of our genuine faith.

We are to “keep ourselves in the love of God.” We do that the same way we “keep ourselves in love with our spouses.” Time invested, distractions rejected, passions focused, discipline physically, mentally, emotionally ...learning more of each other...sacrificing more of ourselves.

We are to invest ourselves in others...we need “skin in the game.” To express practical compassion for some, and for others we “take off the gloves” and drop the hammer. How do we know what and when? By seriously seeking the Spirit of God to intervene and to gift us with spiritual discernment!

And lastly, to purposely walk in the keeping power of God. Intentional living and unflinching priorities.

Jude gives us some evidentiary facts about these “mockers.” Firstly, he assures us that they will indeed come in amongst us. We certainly have experienced that truth over the years! He describes them as individuals who would walk after their own “ungodly lusts.” They don’t want anyone telling them how to live their lives...not even God. A lot of people will make high and mighty claims that they have “intellectual problems” with the Bible or with a church, and what the translation is for that is “I have *moral* problems” with the Bible or with a church because I’m being told to not do something that I am actively involved in and want to continue to practice.

The claim is inevitably that they have a clarity of understanding that the rest of us do not have, and that he or she has a special grasp... a unique enlightenment to see the truth of understanding that apparently outstrips that of the apostles...all of us here today... and ultimately even Christ Himself!

It would be a mistake to read that only as some overtly worldly or fleshly issues...sexually, materialistically, or pagan. No...there are plenty of “ungodly lusts” that have been sought by people who at the same time confessed Christ but had that “side-hustle” going on, and eventually it took the position of front and center and took them out. One “smoking gun” is that these folks do not “unite” people... no, they cause divisions. Every time. We can sometimes mitigate the damage, but there is always damage. They always seem to take out at least one or two civilian bystanders on their way out the door. Jude says that these folks are carnal and sensual. He or she does what they do in order to gain position, attention, power, worldly gain...and often just an easier road of life...or so they think. And lastly, these folks just flat out do not have the Spirit of God. That may seem harsh, but Jude...and John and Peter before him, are not messing around. The alarm is sounding. The fight is on. This is not the time to be passive or soft.

While certainly we know and clearly see the need to contend for the faith out there in the world every day, we can miss Jude's warning about such coming in here...into the church community; These are “spots in your love feasts.” Meaning they feast with us without fear, yet ultimately serving only themselves. (Vs 12)

While this is and always has been a fact... even Jesus experienced this with Judas in the midst of the apostles. However, we need to remember a couple of things. One, we aren't to practice this care by being "sin sniffers." We aren't called to turn over rocks looking for grubs in the church body. God does a good job on His own in bringing these folks to light. He has certainly proven that to me multiple times throughout my years of ministry. We must continue to love them no matter the response, for that is the model that Jesus left us. Two, we are to "build ourselves up on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." (vs 20-21) That does not mean we are to ignore the problem or pretend it isn't there. As a pastor, I do not get that luxury. God is calling us...the “beloved”...to do and live differently, and sometimes that means it is necessary for me to burn down the house. But always...*always*...providing for a way out...a way back to redemption and restoration.

Jude calls upon us to "on some have compassion, making a distinction." (vs 22) Meaning that just because someone messes up doesn't make him or her a wolf. Some folks need grace and patience, and a gentle nudge in the right direction. If they are genuinely fitting into this category, they will respond positively. Yet Jude says with the others, we have to "save with fear." *"Pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh."* (Vs 23) Such a description can only be seen as a 'throw-down.' Again, we can flinch in this matter. We can claim that such seems so 'unloving.' Yet eternity is a long time, and there is nothing "loving" about doing nothing to stop them from self-destruction and certainly the destruction of others along the way. I pray that all of you are willing to storm the gates of the enemy in order to rescue me from my own foolishness.

When we come "face-to-face" with such situations... face-to-face with such people, we are called to "contend." Jesus eventually told Judas *"Whatever you are going to do...do quickly."* (Jn 13:27) Meaning *"get on with it Judas...do what you need to do."* God doesn't need you to bring them to their knees...he does that well enough on His own. However, He clearly has no time for such deceit either. Jude tells us that these folks *"are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."* (Vs 12-13)

**"Twice dead."** Wow. That's serious talk, and a terribly vivid picture! These individuals, at some point, knew the path to life and yet still turned back. It's a heartbreaker to watch. 2 Peter 2:20-22 warns us, *"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: 'A dog returns to his own vomit,' and, 'a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.'"*

Lu 9:62 *"But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"*

Zephaniah 1:5-7 speaks of the false god Molech. Those who worshipped him often literally sacrificed their own children to their God. Horrid to say the least, but I have known many folks who have essentially...practically speaking...done so. But in classic Jewish writings, the worship of Molech also encompassed the "allowing of anything other than Jehovah God to rule over the person."

"For they go up to their roofs and bow down to the sun, moon, and stars.  
They claim to follow the LORD, but then they worship Molech, too.  
And I will destroy those who used to worship me but now no longer do.  
They no longer ask for the LORD's guidance or seek my blessings."  
Stand in silence in the presence of the Sovereign LORD,  
for the awesome day of the LORD's judgment is near." Zeph 1:5-7

And what can we do in answer to such a foreboding warning? "Contend for the faith" Christian...Push Back. May it always be "... as for me and my house, we shall worship the Lord..." Joshua 22:13