



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Jude 1-4

Jude

"Wrestling With Beelzebub"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you Mark, and good morning. You can see from the bulletin that we're starting a new series this morning in Jude. It's a brief book, but we're going to spend maybe five or six weeks in it 'cause it is a book that's just filled with truth and a great deal of references to the Old Testament. We'll begin to look at all of that. It is a book that I think you'll see just from the first four verses that we look at this morning, that is quite simply an alarm. I preached this morning in the first service. You get a sense of something you don't really have a sense of until you preached it, and realize this book is not a feel-good type book, or a feel-good type sermon, not that any sermon or book in the Bible is. It's all profound. There's much in here to encourage us, and I think you'll be encouraged. But this book is an alarm, and Jude wrote it with a great sense of urgency. So, let's look at the first four verses:

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James,

To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you.

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 saints. For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for this time that we have together, this opportunity to be with Your people. It is a blessing, a privilege, and a necessity for us to meet weekly as we're encouraged to do throughout the New Testament, and not forsake the gathering together of the saints, as the author of Hebrews warns us. We're to be here. We're to be together. We're to be reading Your word and we're to be considering its meaning. So Lord, as we do that this morning, we pray that You would open it up to us, that You would guide us in our thinking, that You would help us to understand what Jude has written, and how it applies to us, the warnings, as they apply to us, but also the great encouragement, because he reminds us that in You, we are absolutely secure. We are secure to the very end. What a blessing it is to know that, that Your Son did not lose one of His sheep, and will not lose any of them. So, we have that encouragement. We have it here in our text and we pray that You'd give that to us and give us the sense that we need to be sober-minded and earnest in our faith, and we need to contend for it; we need to fight for it.

So bless us Lord as we study. Bless us spiritually. Build us up in the faith. But we also pray, Lord, for the material needs that we have. They are great. We look at that list of prayer requests at the back of the bulletin and are reminded that so many are in need, physically. They are in difficulty and we pray that You would give them relief. We pray that You'd give healing. We pray that You'd give encouragement. We know that there are many names that could be placed on that list that haven't been, and really, all of us to some degree are to be considered in that way, and in need of prayer. We are, regardless of our circumstances. We constantly need to be prayed for, and we need to be praying for ourselves and one another. We thank You for the fact that You hear us and You bless us and You provide for us. But for those who are undergoing particular difficulty, maybe it's emotional, maybe they're under the strain of pressure at work, or maybe they're without employment. We pray that You would provide for them and encourage them and bless them.

We pray for our nation, that You'd bless it. Bless our leaders with wisdom. We pray that You'd bless our land with peace and prosperity, and not simply that we might enjoy peace and prosperity, but that within that situation, we might enjoy this

opportunity that we are enjoying, and that is the freedom to assemble in worship, and study, and speak the faith to others, and tell of the gospel. So help us to do that and bless our land to that end, that the gospel would go forth, and there would be revival, and men and women will be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

For those of us who have believed, I hope it's everyone in here, but we thank You Lord for that, for the salvation we have in Your Son. So Lord, we look to You to bless us now. Bless us as we sing our next hymn. Bless our special music and bless our time of study together. May it be a time of learning, a time of worship. Thank You for all that we have in Christ. It's in His name we pray. Amen.

[Message] Early in the 20th century, J. Gresham Machen became alarmed by what he was seeing in his denomination and the seminaries and in churches at large. And so, he spoke about it. He gave a sermon which became a paper, and ultimately a book that was published in 1923, *Christianity and Liberalism*. You've probably heard me mention it. I've mentioned it more than once. If you haven't read it, you should read it. But the title itself really, contains the substance of the book. There's Christianity and then there is theological liberalism, and they're not the same thing. That's the point that he makes.

Liberalism, or modernism as it was called, is a different religion. A religion of works, of morality and goodness, not grace and redemption. Liberalism ignores the sinfulness of man, and rejects the authority of the Bible. Liberalism regards Jesus as a man only, not the Godman. He's an example and He's a guide, but He isn't our substitute and Savior. And so, Professor Machen spoke up and wrote his book to defend the Jesus of the Bible and to defend the Bible, its authority, and the truth of the gospel. He wasn't the first to do that. Machen is only one of a long line of Christian warriors who have defended the faith.

One of the first was Jude, who did the same thing in the book he wrote. It's really more like a small tract than a book. It's only 25 verses long, but it is packed full of stuff, of good stuff, doctrine, warnings, and encouragements. Some verses open up, whole chapters of the Bible, and epics of history. Angelic invasion, Sodom and Gomorrah, Michael arguing with Satan. Jude was a great student of Scripture. In fact, he said in verse 3 that he was preparing to write a paper on our common salvation. When he had to drop that project to write this letter and make an appeal for

them to fight for the faith. Bad men had secretly entered the church. They had false ideas about Jesus and lived immoral lives. In fact, they used the Bible to excuse their conduct. Jude's emphasis is on that aspect of these men. It's on their immorality, their departure from the ethics of God's word.

But bad conduct is always the result of bad doctrine, and Jude corrects both. It's an appeal for today as much as it was in Jude's day. He's long gone. Jude died nearly 2,000 years ago but he still speaks to us. His words live and they tell us: contend earnestly for the faith.

Well, who was Jude? He tells us in verse 1. He's actually Judas. That's how his name is spelled in the Greek text, and he was the brother of James. There is only one pair of brothers in the New Testament named Judas and James, and they are the brothers of our Lord. So, Judas is the half-brother of Jesus. His name, in fact, is listed in Matthew chapter 13 and verse 55. In fact, I'll read it: "Is not this the carpenter's son?" They're amazed at Jesus and what He's been doing and what He's been teaching. "Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?" Well, that's our Jude. That was quite a pedigree. Without equal in the New Testament, really. The length with Jesus, you would think, would have set Jude above almost everyone in the world in the eyes of many people. That's real royalty, to be the half-brother of Jesus Christ. And yet, Jude didn't trade on that. Instead, he referred to himself as the brother of James and the servant of Jesus Christ. Now, that's no small thing. In fact, there's no greater title that one could have than that one to be the servant of Jesus Christ.

But what that shows is: there is no privilege that puts a person beyond the need of grace, beyond the need of saving grace. No physical relationship exempts a person from the necessity of personal conversion. Only Christ was sinless. Only He is the eternal Son of God. Everyone else is a creature. Everyone else is a sinner in need of a savior, and Jesus Christ is that Savior, and the only Savior.

Jude came to understand that and realized that his older brother was also his creator and Savior and had come to die for him. And having believed, he became the Lord's servant. He had a special mission as His servant, and Jude did many things. But this is one of the things that he did. This is one of his special missions, and that was writing this letter, the letter that we're studying. Bad men had sneaked into the church and this letter was a warning of danger. He sounds the alarm. He wrote to

believers in an unidentified church. We don't know where they lived. They were dear to his heart, so they may have lived nearby. They may have been in Judea where I suspect Jude lived. But his way of addressing them is not just a way of affection, but it's theological. He addresses them in verse 1 in a way that's all about grace. And when I saw grace, I mean sovereign grace. That's grace. It's a pithy statement, this first verse. It's brief, but it is full of doctrine and it's really worthy of a sermon all of its own. He identifies these believers with three statements.

In fact, Jude liked the number three. Lots of his statements and examples are given in groups of three. And here, there are three words that describe the Christian. We are called, we are loved, and we are kept. Jude believed in the divine initiative. He believed firmly in what John wrote in his first epistle in 1 John 4 verse 19. We love because He first loved us. If you love God, John is saying, it's only because God set His love on you. And He set His love on you from all eternity. If He had been able to write that work that perhaps He did eventually write, that work on our common salvation, I don't doubt that He would've begun that whole work in eternity past where God chose a people for Himself. He might've begun that book much the way Peter began his first epistle in 1 Peter 1:1 to the chosen, to those who had been elected from all eternity. Certainly, Jude begins based on that great doctrine of truth, on the eternal choice that God made of these individuals, but he refers to them in the next stage of God's grace, irresistible grace, the calling of sinners to Himself. It's the grace that every believer in Jesus Christ has experienced. In fact, we're believers in Jesus Christ only because we've been called.

Jude had. It's the only way to explain his faith. He had grown up in the same house with Jesus Christ. He had watched Him daily. He had talked with Him. He had seen His grace and His perfection. Still, he was an unbeliever. John tells us that in John 7 and verse 5. He says, "Not even His brothers were believing in Him." In fact, we learn from Mark chapter 3 that early in the Lord's ministry, His family thought that He was out of His mind, and they continued to think that and would have remained in their unbelief in spite of all of the advantages that they have. And you cannot imagine greater advantages that one could have than to grow up in the same household with Jesus.

And yet, in spite of all of that, if God's grace had not given them new minds and new faith, they would have stayed in their unbelief. But He did. He changed

them. God did that. Now listen, you will never understand salvation unless you understand that it is all of God. I'm not saying you can't be saved without knowing that. Many, many, many genuine Christians don't understand the greatness of God's grace. They don't understand the initiative of God. But I'm telling you: you will never truly understand salvation unless you understand that it's all due to God's unconditional grace. And you won't understand grace until you believe that Christ is the Son of God.

Jude was quick to emphasize all of this. He's quick to emphasize sovereign grace. That's really how he begins his description of his friends. They are the called, those whom the Holy Spirit had called out of darkness into light. And second, they are loved, beloved in God the Father. That wording here is important. It's somewhat disputed. If you have a New International Version, the translation is "loved by God the Father." Now, that's possible because the preposition that's translated here "by" or "in" can be translated both ways. But it normally means "in." It has a sense of location, and that fits here. They are loved in God the Father. One of the commentators, one of the better ones on Jude, J.N.D. Kelly, puts this "His love enfolds them." I like that description of God's love. It enfolds His people, these believers who have been called by Him, have been enfolded in His love.

So, before Jude ever mentions the menace that they faced, and the reason he has written this letter and written it with some urgency in order to urge them to fight, he reminds them of their great blessings. They have many great blessings. They can fight the good fight and oppose the enemy because they're so blessed by the Lord God. And what he mentions here is their security. He's mentioned their calling and their love, and now he comes to their security, that they are well-protected in God the Father. His love never fails. He keeps us secure. That's the third description he gives.

Now, that's security. They are. We are. We can place ourselves here with the original readers of this book. They are kept for Jesus Christ. We are being kept to the very end when He returns. That's the sense of that. Kept for Jesus Christ, kept for His return, or until we go to be with Him. Now, that's security. The absolute security of the believer is emphasized throughout this book. Jude did not believe you could lose your salvation. No writer of the New Testament or the Old Testament believed that because it's not true, and that's certainly clear right here. A believer in Jesus

Christ, and I'm talking about a genuine believer, and there's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't genuinely believe. There are people who profess it and aren't genuine, but the believer in Jesus Christ is secured to the very end.

Jude not only makes that clear here, but he ends the book on that great theme. "Now to Him who was able to keep you from stumbling." He's able to, and He will. He'll keep you from stumbling. He'll keep you to the very end. That's the promise that's repeated in this book and that promise is great.

Now, having said that, it doesn't issue into a life of ease and indolence. Promise that God will never forsake us, the promise that Christ will never let anyone snatch us out of His hand, the promise that we will continue to the end without stumbling because we're kept by the Lord is not a promise of ease and comfort in this life. As one writer put it, wealth, or fame, or success; He doesn't promise that, but it promises that when we are poor, despite failures, God has not let us go, and will not let us go. And that is certainly true. That's the assurance that we have. But this, as I said a moment ago, is no invitation to indolence or indifference about spiritual matters of the soul. We are kept, and we who are kept are to be diligent in keeping ourselves as well. That's later what Jude will say in verse 21. "Keep yourselves in the Lord God." We can do that because He is first of all keeping us. Security is incentive to act, and to act responsibly. That's what Jude will later encourage them to do and really command them to do and what we are to do. But we can do that, and we can continue to believe and trust the Lord because we're secure. It encourages us to do that. But we can continue to do that because He is continuing to give us that faith and that strength and that ability.

We're to be faithful, and we can be faithful, and we will be faithful if we're truly in Christ, because He, first and foremost, is faithful.

In verse 2, Jude prays for his friends, having referred to three characteristics of the believer. Called, loved, and kept. He prays for three blessings. "May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you." Jude wants God's kindness increased and lavished on his friends. There's always more of God's love to be experienced. We never come to the end of that. And it's necessary for us to experience the love of God, experience it constantly and increasingly. We need that, and we look for that. It's necessary because it's necessary for our success in the Christian life. It's necessary that we experience the love and the life of God constantly in order for us to battle the

battles that we face. And it's the battle to which Jude now turns in verse 3. He was diligently preparing a work about our common salvation, he says, when he suddenly dropped everything to sound the alarm. So you can imagine how important this was if he's working on this great work. Perhaps it's his magnum opus. He's really been devoting himself to this work on our common faith, and then suddenly he has to drop everything to tell them that something dangerous is occurring presently. It's going on right now. Men had slipped into the church who wanted to do them harm.

So this letter is a warning. It's a call to arms. It's an urgent plea for them to fight, to contend earnestly for the faith. That word, "agonize," comes from this word "contend," the Greek word. It's an athletic word. It's a word that gives the image of a wrestling match and urges great effort. Fight. That's what Jude is saying. What they were to fight for was the faith, not the act of believing, but what is believed. Christian doctrine, the gospel. It was at stake.

Now, he describes the faith as being once for all handed down to the saints. The New Testament has been given. It has been handed down, which is a way of saying it was revealed. It isn't something invented by the apostles. It is divine revelation, which has been given, he says, once for all, meaning what became the New Testament was given once and for all. More revelation is not being given. This is it. This revelation is not flexible or alterable. It is fixed. It's given once and for all. It is unchangeable, and it is normative. It's the standard for our behavior, for truth and conduct. The Word of God is living. It's alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. But the living word doesn't mean the changeable word, that it's changing and developing, as some have interpreted it that way. No, it's fixed, but it's alive. It changes us. We don't change it. So when we have convictions or ideas that we hold too firmly, but we find it there in contradiction to what the Word of God says, we change. We don't change it. And so he speaks of it in this way. It's been delivered. It's been given once for all. It's our standard. It's the standard by which we judge what is right and wrong. It's our standard for truth and conduct. There's one God. There's one gospel. That has been revealed once for all, and we don't look outside of Scripture for truth regarding faith or practice.

The Bible is our final authority for all of that. This is the only revelation given under heaven that explains the most basic and fundamental questions that people have. It explains who God is, that God is Triune. Who we are explains where we

came from, where we're going, what our condition is, what the remedy is. It explains man's origin and man's destiny. All of the great questions of man are answered in this book. And so to challenge that, to question the Scriptures or add to them is to taint God's word. It's to taint His revelation. More than that, it is to deny it, and that's not only destructive for men, but that's destructive for the church.

So Jude tells them with urgency that they are to fight for the faith. They were to defend the truth. It was really a life and death issue. It's that important. Still, it's not easy to do that. I don't think it's been easy to do that in any age. In Jude's day, certainly not in Luther's time. Any time after. That's not easy today. I don't know that it's more difficult today, but we do face certain challenges that make it difficult. We live in an age that celebrates tolerance and shrinks away from controversy and doesn't like to spell out things in terms of black and white and the definitive aspects of things. And so, that raises objections in the day in which we live.

Machen experienced that. He learned that soon after publishing his book, *Christianity and Liberalism*. It's a book that draws the lines sharply, and some of his critics didn't like that, and some of the critics who didn't like that were his colleagues, his own friends. But this book forced them to take a position, which they'd rather have not have done. The book started things up, but what made things uncomfortable within the denomination didn't make people uncomfortable so much outside of it. What's odd about the book that Machen wrote is that it was recommended by some secular journalists of the day. And one of them was the skeptic, H.L. Mencken who ridiculed fundamentalism. In fact, I have a biography of him at home that was written about five or ten years ago titled, *The Skeptic*. Mencken was a popular columnist at the time, but an implacable opponent of Christianity. And yet, he gave Machen high praise for his book. He recognized Machen as a genuine scholar. He was. He was a New Testament scholar, wrote a grammar that's still used today, Greek grammar, wrote some definitive books on Paul and other things.

But he wrote this about Machen: "If Christianity is really true as he believes," that is as Machen believes, Mencken wrote, "and if the Bible is true, then it is true from cover to cover. So answering, he defies the hosts of Beelzebub to shake him." So, H.L. Mencken who was no believer, he was a skeptic and a critic, he mocked the faith really. He recognized that there was courage in this man, and that if the Bible is true, then it's true from cover to cover, and that's exactly what Machen was saying.

And yet, I think he gives a good description of the enemy. He describes them as the "hosts of Beelzebub." That's really who we face. That's really who we are challenging when we defend the gospel. That's the enemy. The hosts of Beelzebub. We don't wrestle with flesh and blood, Paul tells us; we wrestle with powers, powers that we don't see, with the devil and his ministers. Jude doesn't describe them quite as colorfully as the hosts of Beelzebub, but does identify them as devilish in their schemes. He writes in verse 4 that certain persons have crept in unnoticed.

That's the way the evil one works. He sneaks in. He doesn't come in unmasked. He enters under false colors. These did. They didn't reveal their false ideas and their aberrant behavior. They first fit in as genuine. They came in as interested. They came in as people who cared about the body of Christ. Then suddenly, they introduced their heresy by questioning Scripture. They were secretive and sinister. The New English Bible translates this: "They wormed their way in." That gives an accurate picture and underscores the threat here. These had come in not as devils, not as the hosts of Beelzebub. They came in just the opposite. They came in as helpers and friends. They were probably itinerant preachers, traveling preachers and teachers which were common in the early church. They had entered the church as orthodox men. They'd gained the respect and the confidence of the people in the church. They had evidently gained enough of a hold in the congregation that Jude was writing to that he was very concerned about them, about the congregation. He recognized the danger. These people had a hold on that church, and yet these people should have recognized the danger. They should've recognized what was happening.

This was not a surprising development, and I say that in this sense: Scripture warns of this. All through the Word of God, there's the warning of this very thing. Jude reminds them of that when he describes these men as "those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation." If you have the King James Version, your translation of that is: who were before of old ordained to this condemnation. But the word translated "ordained" means "foretold in writing." That's the literal idea of it. So, it seems more likely, at least to me, that Jude was reminding his readers of the ancient writings of the Hebrew prophets and the warnings they gave of false prophets. Moses warned of false prophets and dreams, as he calls them in Deuteronomy 13. That's a very significant chapter to read about false prophets, false teachers, what identifies them, how they're to be dealt with. He writes about that very clearly in

Deuteronomy 13, some of the last warnings and instruction that Moses gave to his people before they entered into the promised land.

He warns them of the false prophets that would come, but the apostles do the same. They warn of these things. In Galatians chapter 2 and verse 4, Paul writes of those who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty. He calls them false brethren. A false brother is always more dangerous than an out and out pagan. You trust a brother. We have an expression: "Better the devil you know than the devil you don't." These were devils that they didn't know. They didn't recognize them as such. They thought they were friends, but they should've recognized them for what they were. The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles warned of this very thing. Jesus warned of it. John chapter 10, when he speaks of the sheepfold and the good shepherd and all of that. He said that there will be those in the sheepfold who did not enter through the door but climbed over the fence. They're robbers, he says. They're not genuine shepherds. Jude describes them as ungodly persons.

Now, that's a heretic. He is ungodly. He has an irreverent attitude toward God. He doesn't take the Lord seriously. Now, they hid that, of course. They didn't come in openly like that. They spoke of God and they used the right words. They quoted the Bible. They prayed. They sang hymns. I'm assuming they did all of that because they were correct, it seemed, outwardly. But inwardly, they were very different people. That may have shocked some of these people to whom Jude wrote this letter because they'd become quite familiar with these men. They liked them. They listened to them. They thought they were good and effective teachers, and they probably were effective teachers. They'd wormed their way into this congregation, though, and not only into the presence of that congregation, but into their fellowship, and even into their affection. But Jude says: they were ungodly, and that was proved by their behavior. They were immoral men who used the Bible to justify their sin. That's what Jude said. They are ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into licentiousness. They used the doctrine of God's grace as a pretext for immoral conduct.

Grace is God's love for the unworthy. It's the reason for our salvation, and the reason for the sacrifice of God's own Son in order to obtain our salvation, in order to save us. Grace gives free forgiveness at God's expense. What these men did was blasphemous. They turned that free grace into an excuse for free love, for immorality.

Now, there's a word for that. It's called antinomianism. You've heard the word, I'm sure. It very simply means, "against law." It's a term that describes one who believes that they're not restrained by the moral law of God, that they can live an unrestrained life. That's how these men lived. They rejected all moral restraint and they claimed that grace gave them the freedom to do that.

The churches had to deal with that problem from the earliest days. Paul did in Romans chapter 6 and verse 1. He speaks of grace in chapter 5, and then he raises this objection that had been no doubt raised to him many times when he had spoken about grace: what shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin, that grace may increase? Now, he is either in that statement, in Romans 6, dealing with the common objection, you hear it to this day, the common objection to free grace, that it can't be true because if that were true, it would lead to sin. It gives people the liberty to sin. So he's either dealing with that, and I think that's probably what he is dealing with. But if not, he's dealing with people who actually believed that, who actually propagated that. There have been people who have done that. They said, I'm forgiven, so I can live however I want to live. I don't have to worry about punishment. Once saved, always saved. I can do what I want.

Either way, Paul is correcting that. May it never be, he said. Grace leads to morality, not immorality. But there have been people who feel a freedom to sin because of grace. They've used that as their excuse. John Bunyan refers to an individual like that in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. The book spends a lot of time on Bunyan's own conversion, and it was almost a long and painful process for him before he finally was converted and comes to a saving knowledge of Christ. But he wrote of a man after that that he had sought to minister to, and he describes this man when he says that he gave himself up to all manner of filthiness, especially uncleanness. I don't know what the difference between those two are, unless it's sexual uncleanness, and would laugh at exhortations to sobriety. When I labored to rebuke his wickedness, he would laugh the more. That's an ungodly person. He didn't take seriously the Christian life, and he didn't take seriously the Christian's Lord.

That's what Jude says of these people who turn the grace of God into licentiousness and deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. That's the real problem. They had a false Christ. They didn't know Christ. The error that J.

Gresham Machen fought in the early 20th century was the one that the Jude fought in the 1st century. The false teachers rejected the Jesus of the Bible and of history. They didn't believe the revelation of who He is and what He had done, that He is God's eternal Son, very God of very God who became a man and bore our sins in judgment. Now, that's grace. But because they were defective in their thinking about Him, about the Lord and what He did, they didn't understand grace. They distorted it, grossly, into a pretext for sin.

Purity of doctrine is essential and fundamental. Behavior and beliefs are inextricably connected. Jude's emphasis is on moral apostasy. That's the great emphasis of this book: moral apostasy. He deals with men, preachers, and teachers. But professing Christians, who depart from the moral standards of God's word. They deny Christ by their behavior. Regardless of what they professed, their conduct demonstrated their unbelief. And it's their unbelief that's really the root of the problem. They didn't know Christ. And when a person is wrong about Christ, he or she is wrong about everything, and it's reflected in their behavior.

Christ is the Lord and Master. He is the eternal Son of God who requires obedience of His people, and grace enables us to do that. It enables us to be obedient, and to be obedient gladly. It produces in us holy life. It produces that in the believer. We're connected to Jesus Christ. We're connected to His life, and the Spirit of God is within us to enable us to do the very things that He requires us to do. We're required of the Lord to be obedient, to be holy. God is holy. We're to be holy like Him. We don't have that in us in and of ourselves, but we have it in Christ, in the life that He gives us, and the Spirit of God that's within us enables us to do that. That again is God's grace. It changes lives. It's the love of God that transforms us. It makes the believer into a new creation. That's witnessed in a person's behavior.

The behavior of these men demonstrated that they didn't have that grace. They hadn't experienced that grace. They weren't in Christ. They didn't know Christ. So, Jude says they were under judgment. They were condemned, marked out for this condemnation, which is the condemnation that is described in the rest of the letter. It is the judgment of the great day in verse 6, and the punishment of eternal fire in verse 7. Now, that is serious stuff. There's nothing more serious than the truth of the gospel. The reason it was so urgent that they contend earnestly for the faith. We do that in different ways. We do that by exposing error. We see error, we expose it. We

expose it with the truth of the Word of God. That's our standard, and we do that also by positively helping those who have been caught in the web of deceit. And listen, we can all be caught in that web. We need to be carrying forward one another in that way. We're to be ready to do that. We're to be ready to help one another, to encourage one another, to correct one another, to look out for the souls of our brothers and sisters, as well as our own.

That begins with a correct understanding of the gospel. The gospel is the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is the message that God's Son became a man and died for sinners. We are all sinners, every one of us, all without exception. But Christ died to take away sin, to gain forgiveness and eternal life, and He gives that to everyone who believes in Him, and you have it at the moment of faith, and you have it forever. That's the grace of God. If you've never believed in Him, come to Him, trust in Him. He receives all who do and He never lets them go. And then contend for the faith. Learn the faith. Know what it is. Put yourself under the Word of God daily. Let it examine you and confirm to it. You can do that by God's grace, and we all will by His grace. So may God bless us in that way. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You for that power that keeps us. We thank You for the death that saves us. With thank You for Your son the Lord, Jesus Christ. May we live our lives to His honor and Glory to the honor and Glory of our triune God. It's in the name of Your son we pray. Amen.