



Message Transcript

Assembling an Army

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Well, welcome this morning. It's an exciting morning and getting to start a new book in a new series. Help me welcome our Broomfield Campus who's worshipping along with us. So excited to bring the word of God this morning. And before we begin, let's continue to pray. Let's have our hearts ready and prepare to hear everything that the Lord would have us here this morning. Would you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, we just thank you for your living and active word among us. We praise you that you still speak. We praise you that you're alive. We praise you that you want to do your work here this morning. And so Lord, we are asking your help. Lord, be helpful to me as I preach. Be helpful to us as we listen. Because Lord, our desire is to hear what your living and active word tells us, that we would own who you say you are.

We believe what you say about us. And that Lord, we by faith put into practice the very things you show us. This would be an active time of hearing you. And now for all of those gathered who desire to hear the Lord and take steps of faith the way he shows you, will you agree with me this morning by very loudly saying the word, amen. Amen.

On July 21st, 1989, Iron Mike Tyson stepped in the ring against Carl the Truth Williams to defend his heavyweight title bout. He was 36 and [inaudible 00:01:20] at the time. And he stepped into the ring. It was like this huge fight. I remember, I was 18 years old that summer. And I remember we had pay per viewer, we were watching it with a bunch of friends. And as the fight started, I remember one of my friends was

like, hey, I'll be right back. Went to get something to eat. Went to the bathroom.

By the time he got back, the fight was over. 93 seconds in, Mike Tyson threw a left jab, sending him to the mat. The fight was called. It was over. He stepped into the ring to defend his heavyweight championship and that night, he was declared the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world.

That's no longer the case today. But I'm here to tell you that when Jesus Christ hung on the cross for all your sins and he went to the grave, on that Sunday morning when he got out, he was declared the undisputed King of Kings and Lord of Lords and he always was, and he always will be. And when he did, he assembled an army called the church of God and the church of God are his soldiers. He's the captain of the Lord's armies and we are his soldiers to step into his ring called his world and defend the truth of the gospel.

So what we're going to take a look at over the next four weeks is, what does it look like to stand firm in the faith? What does it look like to stand for the faith of the gospel? And to do that, we're going to be taking a look at the book of Jude. If you open your Bible up to the book of Jude, it is the second to last book in your Bible. It is the 65th book in your Bible. It's only 25 verses long. But you're going to see over the next four weeks, that in these 25 verses are jam-packed information for you that will help you stand firm in the faith of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our hope today is to unpack the first seven verses of that. I'd like to read those out loud and then we'll take a look at them together and what God would say to us as

he assembles us as his army and how he wants us to live. Notice what it says.

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.

Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord after saving a people out of the land of Egypt subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, he has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these, indulged in gross immorality and went after a strange flesh are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

And here as Jude writes this short letter, as he addresses it, he's going to show us what it looks like and what God's army, what we as his saints must be. Now, when we talk about the author of this book. The author of this book is the half brother of Jesus Christ.

Many people believe that Jesus was an only child. He certainly wasn't an only

child. You remember when he was teaching in Nazareth and he went back to teach, in Mark chapter six and verse three, we learn about some of his family. As he was teaching, the people were looking at him and they said, is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him.

Notice this Jesus had that we know of at least four brothers and he had sisters. So he at least had two sisters. So Jesus was the oldest of at least seven kids. The difference was Jesus was born of the Virgin. Mary. The Bible goes into long links to show how Mary and Joseph had not come together until after Jesus was born.

Because Jesus, unlike his brothers and sisters, he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He wasn't conceived by Mary and Joseph. Jesus Christ is God's eternal son. He always has been. Jude or Judas, as he said here, is Jesus's half brother. So he grew up with the son of God being the oldest child in his family. If you think you have sibling rivalry in your family, understand it must have been hard for Judas and for James and the others.

And in John chapter seven, verse five, as Jesus was going around doing all of his many ministry we learn, for not even his brothers were believing in him. Even as Jesus started his ministry, was doing his ministry, his brothers were like, our brother's nuts. He's going around telling everybody that he's the way, the truth and the life and the only way to God is through him. He's our brother. There's something wrong with this guy.

And yet, post resurrection, it says in 1st Corinthians 15 and verse seven, that he appeared to James. James believed and was converted, led the church in Jerusalem. And we see in acts chapter one in verse 14, as they were all gathered to pray before the church was birthed, it says, these all with one mind, will continually devoting themselves to prayer along with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and with his brothers. Guess what? Jesus' brothers were converted.

Post resurrection, as they saw their brother rise from the dead, they realized he's not just our brother, he's God in flesh. He's the God of the universe. And it's really interesting because, when Jesus taught at the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew chapter seven, at the end, as Jesus got done speaking, the scribes and Pharisees were amazed because he spoke as one with authority.

This must have gotten to his brother's heart. Because if you read the book of James, who's Jesus' half brother, and you read the book of Jude, who's Jesus' half brother, both of these guys speak with incredible authority. And yet when they refer to themselves, they will not refer to themselves as the brother of Jesus.

Notice how Jude positions himself. Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. Even though biologically, even though... Not biologic, but same family structure. He's Jesus' brother in the family. He's the half brother of Jesus. That's not how he refers himself. Once he understands that Jesus is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, what is he? I'm a bond servant. I'm a willing slave of the Lord Jesus Christ and I'm brother to James. James is my brother. Jesus Christ is my Lord.

When Thomas met Jesus post resurrection, what'd he say? My Lord and my God. There's a humility in a position very similar to what we see in John, the Baptist. Jesus said of all men born, there has not been one who is greater than John the Baptist. And yet what did John the Baptist say about his relationship with Jesus Christ? Then I am not even worthy to untie the thong of his sandal. And in John 3:30, he said, he must increase, I must decrease.

When you hear the authority that's going to come out of this book, understand this, it's the authorities coming out of his humility, because his humility is this, even though I was in the same family as the God of the universe, I'm nothing like him. He's my God, I serve him. I'm a willing slave to the Lord Jesus Christ and I'm a brother of James. James is my brother.

And notice what he says. He's going to begin to talk about what God's army must be. If we're going to step into the ring of the world and the ring of the church and defend the faith of the gospel, what must we do?

The first is this, God's army must remember our identity and our responsibility. You must remember your identity and your responsibility. Notice who it's addressed to. To those who are called, beloved in God the father and kept for Jesus Christ.

Now I don't know about you, but as a believer, even when I look in the mirror, those aren't words that naturally come to me. I mean, when I think about my relationship to God, those aren't three words that just naturally come into my life. Those are words that I have to own because God says that's who I am. If you have

placed your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, those three words apply to you.

The first one is this, you have been called by God. Make no mistake about it. When we're studying the faith and we're learning the faith and we're being drawn to the faith and we're trying to figure out, is Jesus really real, is he not? At the moment in time that we place our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, here's what you learn. It's never been you pursuing God, it's always been God pursuing you.

John 15:16, Jesus said, you did not choose me, I chose you and appointed you that you may go bear the fruit that will last. What he was saying was this, no matter who you think you are, you never came searching for God.

The Bible says, there's no one good, there's no not one, there's no one who seeks after God. God came looking for you. If you don't know God, he's still searching you. God wants to have a relationship with you. And what are you? You're called by the God of the universe, which means this, that you are his, you belong to him, he wants you as his own and he has purpose in your life.

Just think about these verses in Romans chapter eight and in verse 30, we read it like this, here's what he says, in verse 29, it says, for those whom he fore knew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the first born among many brethren. And notice what it says in verse 30. And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified.

What's the truth? The truth is this, the truth is those that God has called to

himself, he's declared righteous. He's justified as, just as if you've never sinned. It's just as if you've always been righteous. And what's he also done? It's as good as done that you will be glorified. You've been called to the eternal hope of glory in Christ Jesus.

If you're a believer and you look in the mirror, oftentimes the enemy will lie to you and say that you're nothing, you're a nobody, you should know better, you should have done different. No, you've been called by the God of the universe to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus. That's your identity. That's who you are. What else are you? Well, you're beloved. You're loved by God.

Notice what he says next. He says, beloved in God the father. Now, what does beloved mean? It means chosen. It means priceless. It means my attention is on you. It means you're the apple of my eye. How does God think about those who have trusted in his son? He loves you with an unconditional, unmerited favor. You're his child. You're his beloved son or you're his beloved daughter. It's who you are. And the enemy will lie to you and say, you're no good and you're still a sinner and God doesn't like you anymore and you're really not that good.

No, you've been called by the eternal God of the universe and he loves you. The reason I end every service saying, you are loved. It's not because it's a catchy, clever thing that we just say. The Bible teaches, for those who are in Christ, that you are loved. The Bible teaches that those who haven't trusted Christ, that he's still seeking after you because you are love. It's a truth of God's word, right? And this is who we are in him.

Think about how John says it in 1st John chapter three versus one to three. See how great a love the father has bestowed on us that we would be called children of God and such we are. We are. We are in the family of God because of our faith and belief in his son. That's who we are. When God assembles his army, he wants us to know that we are called and we are loved.

And number three, and this is a biggie. The enemy doesn't want you to know this. That you are kept for Jesus Christ. You are kept for him. It means you are preserved for him. It means no one can snatch you out of God's hand. True believers will always persevere to the end. It's really good news. Because as believers, when we sin, oftentimes the enemy lies and says, well, maybe you're not good enough. Maybe you're not a Christian anymore. Maybe things aren't going well. Maybe God doesn't still love you. Maybe you're not called. No, he's kept you. He's preserved you.

Here in the book of Ephesians chapter one, verses 13 and 14, in Ephesians chapter one and verse 13 and 14, the Apostle Paul writes it this way, in him Jesus, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of his glory.

What does that mean in short? It means when you got saved, the Holy Spirit sealed you for the day of redemption. He made a down payment that God is guaranteed to buy and pay and it is paid in full with Jesus.

So here's what's true about you. In the army that God is assembling, in the army that God is putting together, he's putting together an army of people who believe in the son of God, who believe he died and rose from the dead. And if that's true of you, you are called by God's eternal glory. You are beloved and you are chosen by him and you are kept for him and no one, but no one can change that. Nothing in all creation can separate you from the love of God.

How good is that news this morning? That's our identity. And Jude wants us to understand before he tells us how to fight, you better understand who you are in the fight and who you are as you are called and you are beloved and you are kept for Jesus. Then he goes on to tell us, okay, so how are we going to dispense some of these weaponry? And he says this, may mercy and peace and love be multiplied in you. Means this, may you experience more of God's mercy, peace and love.

See, the Bible says, it's the kindness of the Lord that leads us to repentance. Mercy means this, you don't get what you do deserve. And here's what you deserve, the Bible makes clear that you deserve hell. We think we sin and that's not that big of a deal and God's job is to forgive.

No. Sin cost the son of God his life on a cross. Sin is an abomination to God. God hates sin. He can't stand sin. So what does he do? He sent his own son to be what? Merciful to us. He didn't want to give us what we deserve. He didn't want to send us to hell. He wanted to extend mercy and not give us what we deserved.

In Ephesians chapter two and verse four, we read exactly what he did. In

Ephesians 2:4, we read God's heart. But God being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace, you have been saved. Now you think about mercy. I mean, who here could use a little more mercy?

See, we tend to beat ourselves up so much in the Christian faith because we know that we're supposed to live like this, but our lives live like this. And what do we need? We need to bask in the mercy of God. Because the Bible says that his mercies are new every single morning. It means God doesn't give according to what you deserve. God gives according to the lavishness of his son. And how can you give what God wants you to give if you don't own what God's willing to give to you?

In other words, if when we share the gospel to other people, what we want to dispense is the mercy of God so they can know in spite of their sin, there's a merciful God who loves them. If you haven't received the mercy in your life, you can't extend mercy to other people. And if you haven't experienced the mercy of God in your life, what you will extend to other people is truth without mercy, which will feel like judgment.

If you're going to fight and defend the faith, you need to experience the mercy of God, where you can bask in the fact with a big smile on your face, wow, I can't believe God still loves me in spite of the way I'm acting. I can't believe that God's doing this all over again to me. God, you are so good to me and I've relished so much in your mercy that when I meet other people that are in grievous sin, I can extend mercy to them too because I know how much mercy you've given to me.

When Christians are judgemental of other Christians, it's because they haven't experienced the fullness of God's mercy for themselves. Amen. Experience God's mercy. Jude says, may God's mercy be multiplied in your life. May you as you grow, see how great your sin is and how merciful God is to you in your sin. Not only your mercy, but what? You see that word love again, don't you? May mercy and peace and love.

Let's talk about peace. Peace, who could use a little more peace in their life? For unto us, the child is born. For unto us, a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called the wonderful council, the Mighty God, the everlasting father and the prince of, say it with me, peace. Jesus tells us... Paul tells us to be anxious about nothing. But in everything, present our request to God and what? The peace of God, which transcends... Your all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Peace.

Roman's 5:1 says, therefore, having been justified, we have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. For those of you who aren't believers, the reason God seems distant and the reason God seems angry at you is you don't have peace with him. Well, where did peace take place? It took place at the cross. There was a peace offering made where Jesus Christ shed his blood so that you could live and he rose from the dead to offer peace so that you no longer have to be in a struggle with God. Because through Jesus Christ, all your sins can be forgiven and you can have peace, present peace.

Now, here's what I can promise you in this world, you're going to have tribulation. Here's what I can promise you in this world, you will suffer. I mean, it's a guarantee. I can't tell you how, I can just tell you that you will. But I can also tell you, that in the middle of whatever you go through, presently in that moment, you can have God's peace. It's available to you. So take it. The more you have his peace, then you can extend his peace to others.

If you haven't basked in his peace and you still feel like you're wrestling with God all the time, it's hard to let other people know how they can come into a peaceful relationship with God. Experience his mercy, experience his peace. May it be multiplied to you and may his love be multiplied to you.

We've been talking about this love, but notice 1st John 4:19, we love because he first loved us. How are we even able to love? Non-Christians cannot love in a biblical kind of way. Non-Christians may be able to love those that are good to them, but only Christians can love those who hurt them. We love because he first loved us. God demonstrated his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

He said, may those truths be multiplied in your life. Before you go out and defend, before you go out and fight for the faith, what do you have to be filled with? His mercy and his peace and his love. Why? So that when you go out and defend the truth, mercy and peace and love exude from you so that you can experience the tangible nature of who our resurrected Christ is. God wants to extend more mercy to you. God wants to extend more peace to you today. God wants to extend more love to you

today. May they be multiplied in you, Jude says.

Because oftentimes when we think about defending the faith, we think about having a fight. And we think about having fight out in the marketplace to defend and prove all those non-Christians wrong. I've never really seen that work.

I've never really watched people get beat over the head or shouted at that they are like, you know what? I never thought about that before. I'm so glad you came. I've never seen that. But I have seen the mercy of God transform people's life. And I've seen the peace of God transform people's lives. And I've seen the love of God transform people's lives. And you have to own it before you can give it away. Because even Paul says that the weapons that we're going to fight with when we have this battle, are not the weapons that the world gives, right?

And 2nd Corinthians 10:3 and following, he says, for even though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are dissolving speculations in every lofty thing, raised up against the knowledge of God and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Remember your identity and remember your responsibility. Your identity is that you're called of God and that you're chosen by him and that you're loved by him and that you're kept by him and nothing you can ever do can change that if you've trusted in Jesus Christ. And because of that, may God's mercy and peace flood you and may you be so filled with that, that you extend that and extend God's love to all those in the

world who are looking for that.

Because if you were to walk out in the world today and say, who needs more of God's mercy? Who needs more of God's peace? Who needs more of God's love? Everybody, if they're honest with themselves would say, I do. And we're to be the dispensers of that. But in order to dispense it, we got to own it. But so often in the church, instead of owning and receiving the truth of who we are in Christ, what are we trying to do?

We're trying to fix our sin, which we know we can't fix because if you could have fixed it, God wouldn't have needed to send his son to die in the cross for it. What you need to do is repent of it and let God fill you afresh all over again. Judgemental people are just simply people that haven't experienced the mercy of God. Once you've experienced the mercy of God, it doesn't matter what the sin is somebody else's sin, because you're going to look at them and you're going to say, much like the Apostle Paul did, of all sinners of whom I'm the worst.

I'm aware of my own testimony. I'm aware of everything God's done in my life. I'm not so concerned about who you are. I know how much mercy he has given to me. And if he can do that for me, I know he can do it for you.

And people that can't say that, they see themselves falsely. They see themselves as, I'm a pretty good person. Before I came to Christ and God didn't need to give me much mercy, so I'm just in because I've always done right. You're wrong. You were dead in your trespasses and sins. There was nothing good about you. It's the identity

you have now that you're in Christ that makes you special. Amen.

So if you're going to... When God assembles his army, he says, first thing you need to know, I'm the captain of the Lord's armies and you need to know your identity and I'm the Lord of it all, so receive everything you have from me so you can dispense me and not just your own agenda. Amen. Then he says this, assembling an army also involves that we contend for the faith without being complacent. That we contend for the faith without being complacent.

Notice what he says, beloved, there's that word again. You chosen people that God loves so much, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you tend earnestly for the faith that was once for all handed down to the saints. Can you hear Jude's heart?

When I was getting ready to write you, here's what I want to talk about. I want to talk about everything we share together as believers. As a pastor, I can tell you when I'm preaching through the word, those are the weekends I love the most. Let's just talk about how awesome our God is and everything that we share together.

Let's talk about the fact that through Christ's death on the cross and in his resurrection, we are now indwelt with the Holy Spirit. That Christ is in me, the hope of glory. That all of our sins are completely forgiven. That no one can snatch us out of God's hand. That we can be assured that when Jesus returns, we will be standing in glory with him forever and ever. That God's favors on us, that he loves us, that he's blessing to us, no matter how hard our trial is, God hears our prayers, that we're going

to be glorified.

I mean, we go on and on and on and on about the goodness of the salvation that we share. We were dead and now we're alive and look at what God's done. But as Jude's writing saying, man, I'd love to talk to you about that. But I just felt this shift from the Holy Spirit that I would call you to contend for the faith that was handed down once and for all.

Now, what's he talking about? He's talking about the faith. He's talking about faith in the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He's talking about all the New Testament teaching of what the apostles taught us. That was handed down once for all. What does that mean? That means there's never any new gospel. That means there's never any new way to get to God. That means what Jesus and his apostle said is completely true and we're called to defend that.

So what are we defending? We're defending his word. We're not defending our opinion. We're not defending our testimony. We are defending the word of God. As I've heard different pastors preach over the years, I've heard them say stuff like this, if it's new, if it's not true. If it's too new, it's not true. And if it's true, it's not new.

Here's the thing you'll hear all the time, there's some new way, there's some secret, there's some new book, there's something nobody else ever told you about. No. We've been handed down the faith once for all. You say, well, Pastor Jeff, I came to Christ, but I didn't come to Christ through the Bible. I came to Christ because I had a vision of God and I know. My theology's big enough to accept that. But here's how

you know that your faith is real because you went back to the scriptures and realized that the revelation of Jesus Christ is true.

1st Corinthians 15, tells me, for Christ died according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised according to the scriptures. The word of God testifies that Jesus Christ is God's living word. He is the way, the truth, of life. No one comes to the father except through him. It is the most beloved story ever told, that through Christ, all your sins can be forgiven. Through Christ, you can actually have a relationship with God. And he's the all only way that you can ever have it.

He says contend for that. Fight for that. Contend literally means this, exert earnest, intense effort on behalf of. It means when it comes to God's word, we should be people that do not tolerate when people don't uphold the word of God. When you hear someone that doesn't do that, that's a problem. And in Jude's generation as well as ours, he gives testimony to what Peter told us was going to happen.

Notice what he says in verse four, for certain persons have crept in unnoticed and those who were long beforehand, marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness and deny our only master and Lord Jesus Christ. What is he saying? He says, there are those who are going to be apostates who sneak into the church.

Now when we think about contending for the faith, oftentimes people in church think, man, we got to defend ourself because look what the government's doing. We got to defend ourself because look what the world's doing. We got to defend

ourselves. And there are some dangers out there, but the bigger danger is not what's out there, the bigger danger is what's inside the church. The bigger danger is what's being birthed inside the church.

Notice what he said, there are certain people who have crept in unnoticed. It means there's false teaching coming in and none of the sheep even realize it's false teaching. They're like, hearing it but they don't even realize that it's poisonous. They've crept in unnoticed. It means they're purposeful and they're sneaky. And you say, well, why would that happen? Well, understand this, that our enemy is a deceiver and that he has a desire to deceive the saints and to keep blinded unbelievers.

2nd Corinthians 11:10, Paul talks about why he preaches so much. And 2nd Corinthians 11:10, he says, as the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows that I do. But what I am doing, I will be continue to do so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded as we are in the manner about which they are boasting.

Why am I going to preach so much? I'm going to preach the truth so much so you know it so much because if I don't continue to preach the truth of God, other people are going to come in and they're going to preach things to you and they think they're just like us, but they're not. Because they're not preaching the truth of the faith that was handed down once for all.

What does he say about them? He says for such men are false apostles,

deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. Means there's people in the church that pretend to be God followers that are preaching that aren't. And he says, well, no wonder, for Satan even disguises himself as an angel of light, therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness whose end will be according to their deeds.

What is he saying? Why wouldn't that be the case? Why wouldn't one of Satan's strongest strategies be to put people in a pulpit, that don't love God, that don't know God, to teach false doctrine, to keep non-believers from trusting and to deceive believers from actually pursuing the truth. That's his strategy. Why?

Satan's not an angel of light. He pretends to be an angel of light. The reason you sin is that he makes sin look attractive. He pretends it's in the light. Jesus is the light of the world. Satan is darkness. But just as he masquerades as an angel of light, some of his strongest servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Meaning, in our pulpits across our country, many people have crept in unaware, sheep don't even know that these people that are preaching to them, aren't even believers in the one true God. It's scary. It's really scary.

And what does he say about these people? He says, who were long ago beforehand marked out for condemnation. What this doesn't mean, it doesn't mean that God selected people to be false apostles and prophets that he's going to send to hell. What it means is, God decided beforehand that when men stood up and proclaimed a false gospel and started taking people away from him, that their condemnation was going to be sure one day. That they were going to be punished for what they did

someday, because they are standing on behalf of the truth of God.

See, preaching, when you preach, if you're going to listen to somebody preach, this should be what you hear them preach. Now, stories can highlight this, but the thread of what they're saying, you better be able to look down in your own Bible and say, I see exactly where they got that. That's right here in God's word.

The Bible is not meant as a sounding board for someone's own ideals, personal opinions, preferences and stories, just to reference two or three times during a message and call it biblical. That's not preaching. It's not preaching. It's the word of God, right? It's the word of God.

I mean, that's why when I prepare for messages like this, during the week, it's hard. I'm telling you it's hard. Like preparing... Because here's what I used to falsely think, I went to a school that promised that they would teach us all 66 books to the by Bible.

And when I went to Dallas Seminary and I was taught that... I falsely believe when I went there, that once I went there, I don't know enough of God's word yet, but when I go there, then I'm going to know everything I need to know about God's word and I'm going to leave Dallas and I'm going to go teach it and it's going to be awesome. And God, all I need to do is spend four years of my life and then I'll go turn the world upside down for you.

And from day one I got into seminary, it was never about all the word I was learning. It was about what the word was doing to me. It was like I was going on

God's anvil and all he was doing was grinding my heart and showing me all the things in my life that were wrong and everything that he wanted to change and all my selfishness and all my sin and how he needed to change me and how I needed to grow and how I didn't measure up apart from him.

And I couldn't wait to get out of school. Because I want to be done with all that. And then the day I graduated, it never stopped. And I could tell you as a pastor, the more challenges and tribulations and problems I have, the stronger my preaching is. Because it forces me to deal with me and it forces me to deal with God. And during those tribulations and struggles, God is growing me. And I think of preaching. I know most of you don't preach. I think of preaching like sneezing a lot.

I mean during the week, it's like I got this itch and I just can't wait to get it out. I mean, doing it's hard, but on the weekends, it's like [inaudible 00:35:33]. I'm like, this is the easy part. I mean, this is like fun. I've been working this up all week. Let's do this thing, right? And that's what he's talking about here.

But there's some who are crept in, they're unnoticed. And what does he say about these people? They're ungodly persons. They're ungodly. It means they're not living their life to honor the Lord. They're living their lives to honor themselves. They're using God as a crutch to build them. They're using God to be their servant rather than for them to be a servant of the Lord.

And how do you know they're on godly? Because they turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. Lasciviousness is just wicked and lewd living. It's doing whatever you

want. Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness is the false gospel that teaches this, once you're saved, you can just live however you want. It doesn't even matter. Hey, just pray this prayer and even if you really don't know anything about it, just live however you want. Live as sinful as you want and God will take you to heaven.

I can't find one story, Old Testament or New that would testify to that. I can't find one person Jesus met in his ministry who said, I don't know that I really believe in you and he said, don't worry about it. Just pray this real prayer that you believe in me and then go live a sinful life and you'll go to heaven.

I see just the opposite all the time. One thing you lack, go sell everything you have and come follow me and then your reward will be great in heaven and the man walks away sad. I see him show incredible mercy and grace to a woman caught in adultery. And then he says, where are your accusers? She says, they're not here. And he's says, well then, go and sin no more. I mean, if the grace of God is really in your life, that means Jesus Christ is in you. So to continue a life of sin is unaligned with who you are in Christ.

I mean, what should we say? Should we go on sinning so grace will abound all the more. May it never be. If you receive the grace of God, the grace of God should be changing you all the time. It doesn't mean that when you become a Christian all your sin goes away. Can I get an amen to that? I mean, it doesn't mean that I became a Christian so I shouldn't sin anymore.

Pastor Jeff saying, I have sin in my life. Some of the greatest moments in your

life to know that you're a Christian, is when you're aware of all the sin in your life and you know you need God to continually remove it. That's showing you're getting closer and that you're growing in holiness.

I'm talking about the false gospel in our country that teaches this, all I need you to do today is raise a hand, walking up, fill out this card, just tell Jesus you love him this morning. Then go live however you want and whatever kind of sin and disregard God and never think about him again. That's not a gospel, that's not even good news. It's damnable. And you'll spend eternity in hell if that's the gospel that you believe.

That's why Jude's getting all fired up. That's why I'm getting all fired up. Because there are not enough people that will tell the truth. Because if you read through God's word, grace is not just a saving grace. God's grace is a sanctifying grace, right? Write this verse down, Titus 2:11 and following. For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men. It's by grace you've been saved. Note what else it says.

Instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly. When? In the present age.

If Christ is in you, what is his desire? For you to live righteous and godly. When? Not when you get to heaven. Now. And because we all admit that we're sinners and we don't always live that way, then what are we doing? We're not work on our behaviors. We're not trying to modify things and fix things so we look better on the outside, we're telling God, God, in this area of my life, I'm not holy and I'm not righteous and you need to change me.

And the Bible tells us, when we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Amen. The grace of God is not a license to go sin however you want. Because here's the problem we have culture. Let me just boil it down real, real fast.

Most people think the gospel is what God's benefits are for you, whether you're a believer in Christ or not. The gospel's not benefits. The gospel's Jesus Christ. The gospel is this, do you believe that God's eternal son hung on a cross for all your sins and died and rose? Do you want him, even if you got no other benefits than just having him?

If your answer's not yes, then you don't understand the gospel. The gospel is not, hey, you're a sinner, hey, God will bless you. Hey, you're a sinner, God will favor you. Hey, you're a sinner, God will forgive. Hey, you're a sinner, just live however you want. No, it's this, will you recognize that you're dead in your sins and trespasses and you need Jesus and you need him and you want him above all else. Now through Jesus, he can give favor and he can give blessing, but it's Jesus Christ that we want.

So think about this. Notice what he says next. These false prophets turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. They tell people it doesn't matter how you live and you can still be saved. Those are false prophets. And what else they do? They deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Here in Inglewood, we only have four words up on the wall. Jesus Christ is Lord. That's all you need to know. He's the Lord overall. He is the King of Kings. He is the reigning ruler of the world and he always will be. Do

you love him?

Let me just tell you something about false prophets. False prophets don't care what God says, because they don't love God. False prophets are scared of God's word because they don't love God's word. So while you may hear a false prophet reference the Bible or talk about the Bible, they won't share the wholeness of God's Bible, because they're embarrassed by God. What you might hear from a false prophet is how God wants to bless you. God wants to favor you. God wants to give you money. God wants to make your relationships better.

But what you won't hear is you're dead in your sins and your trespasses. What you won't hear is that hell is your future. What you won't hear is that hell a real place. What you won't hear is that God is righteous and holy and good. What you won't hear is that God is angry with sinners every single day and his rath remains on all those who haven't repented. You'll never hear that. You'll never hear about the Trinity. You'll never hear about the glory of God. You'll never hear about truths that I'm so passionate about. Why? Because false prophets don't love God.

So the only thing they could teach people how to do, is how to live their best life here on earth and how to just enjoy this. If you're a nonbeliever and you live your best life here on earth, you'll spend your eternity in hell. That's not good news. It's false teaching.

That's what Jude is saying. And he's fired up because in his generation, just like our generation, there are a bunch of people who think they're saved that aren't saved.

Because they don't love Jesus. They don't love God. They've never repented of their sins. They never trusted Christ and yet they falsely believe that they're going to heaven because they've falsely been told by a false prophet, by praying some simple prayer that they don't even need to believe that God loves him.

Now I've already told you, God loves you. But how do you experience his sonship or daughtership? You repent of your sin and you trust in the Lord, Jesus Christ. That's what he's talking about. Amen.

And sometimes I know here at Brave Church, I feel like Jeremiah felt like when I'm called to preach and say hard things and do hard things. I'm like, how come nobody else is saying that? How come nobody else is talking like this? Because there's a lot of people in pulpits that love themselves more than they love the word of God. It's just that simple.

Because I know, the Bible tells me that I'm going to give an account to Jesus for every word I said. Not just at this service, but what I said last night at the Saturday night service, what I'm going to say at the 11 o'clock service. Every word that I say about God's truth. Why? Because the word of God shapes the direction of where people are going. And I'm accountable to that. And I pity and I feel sorry for those who have used platforms to teach something other than what God wants said.

Because when I appear before God, I want to be able to say, God, I did my best and I know I'm not perfect and I know I'm sinful and I know I'm broken and I didn't understand everything, but I tried my darnedest to tell people what you wanted them to

hear. Amen.

That's what I hope I can tell hell God. Because I'm so intimidated by who he is and how vast he is and how marvelous he is and how good he is that I don't want to stand in the line with a bunch of people that said, I knew your word said that but I was embarrassed by you. Jesus said, if you're ashamed of me and my words in this generation, I'll be ashamed of you when I come. And there are congregations by the droves that are being led by false prophets and false apostles who don't teach Jesus Christ.

Ask me on national television if I believe Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life and if he's the only way to get to the father, regardless of your religious background. Yes. It's yes here. It's yes there. It's just yes. Why? Because I love the gospel. Because God's willing to save anybody, anywhere, at any time that repents and trusts in him.

This is why Jude's getting so fired up. He's saying, because people are always creeping in and they're trying to dumb down the gospel and make the gospel about the here and now and here's what the truth about the here and now is, there's times God blesses you in the here and now. I mean, God is an awesome God.

He loves us. He puts our favor on us. Sometimes he does that. Sometimes he has us go through trials. Sometimes he does that. Sometimes he heals us from our sickness. Sometimes he does that. Sometimes he heals us when we die. Sometimes he does that. Sometimes he provides for all our financial means. Sometimes he lets us

struggle when we don't have enough. Sometimes God chooses to do whatever God wants to do because his purpose is growing us in his glory. Not just making sure that he's our slave. Amen.

He's our God. We're slaves of him. And here's what Jude says about assembling this army. He said, if you know your identity and you know your responsibility, he says contend earnestly for this book. Contend earnestly for the grace of God that God, the father sent his son to be the savior of the world. And then he gives a warning. He's going to give us three warnings. And the warning is this. As God assembles his army, just beware, we've talked about it a little bit. Be aware that God only saves believers. Just be aware that God only saves believers.

He's going to get three stories, three illustrations. The first one is his covenant with the people of Israel. He says, now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord after saving a people out of the land of Egypt subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. Do you remember that story?

God sent Moses into Egypt to tell Pharaoh, let my people go. God miraculously sent plagues. God ultimately delivered them all. All of Israel saw the 10 plagues. All of Israel saw the massive deliverance. All of Israel saw God move in a pillar of fire and a pillar cloud. All of Israel saw God part the red sea. All of Israel crossed on dry ground. All of Israel watched God close the sea and kill all the armies of Egypt. All of them saw. And yet what happens when they get through? They go to spy out the land.

You can read this in Numbers 13 and 14. And when the spies go in there, there's

two that come back, Joshua and Caleb, that says it's ours for the taking. Let's take the land. Moses agrees. Those three men stand and everybody else spreads rumors and said, we can't do it. We don't believe that God wants us to do this. We don't believe we're ready yet. We don't believe we can't.

So what does God do? Says I've had enough of you. I've shown you all my glory. I've shown you all that I am. I've shown you how great I am. You've witness all my miracles. You've seen how awesome I am. Now you're going to stand here in the desert until all of you die. Then Joshua and Caleb can go in. It means this folks, just listen. Those were his covenant people. Just because you come to church and just because you sense God and just because you have a feeling in your heart and just because you hear the word convicting you, does not mean that you're a believer in him.

A believer is one who is placing their faith and trust in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, his death and his resurrection from the dead. It's not enough to come to church. It's not enough to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. He already knows that. It's to confess with your mouth that he's Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you'll be saved. It's when you willingly put yourself under the Lordship of Christ, then you can be sure that I know I'm his son. Then you can be sure, I know I'm his daughter.

Now Pastor Jeff, why do you say God only takes believers? I thought the gospel was for everybody. I thought the gospel was for unbelievers. No, it's not what the Bible says. I mean, John 3:16, remember that verse. For God so loved the world, say with me. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever

believes. It doesn't say whoever doesn't believe. It says whoever believes will not perish, but have eternal life.

Paul says in Romans 1:16, for I'm not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God, for it is under salvation, for everyone who believes. The gospel is to be proclaimed to the world but the gospel proclaimed to the world for those who will believe. It's believers. God only takes believers to heaven. He's saying this, don't think that because you hang out with God's covenant community that you're automatically in. Don't think because your mom and dad are devout Christian, you're automatically in. Where is your belief?

We've been saved by grace through faith. Belief. You must believe. Then he is going to give a picture of angels. He says in angels who do not keep their own domain, but abandon their proper abode, he has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Now we don't totally understand this and there's different Bible scholars that will say it differently. Personally, I understand this to be referring to Genesis 6:1-4, where you see angels, I believe they are angels that are being discussed. Not everybody does. But angels that came and took over men's bodies and then they got with women and they produced a race that was evil and God had had enough.

Now whether you believe that that's the translation or not, here's what you can be sure of from the word of God, that there were angels that did not keep their domain. That means they went outside of God's realm of authority. We know that for sure. And

they abandoned their proper abode, which means they rebelled against their created role and their place. And even the angels that were created to worship God, when they didn't do what God wanted them to do, what did he do? He locked them up, right? And held them in bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

That means that we're created angels that are now under bondage that are being locked up until the great day of judgment happens when they will be judged for all eternity for leaving their place of abode and their creative [inaudible 00:50:02]. Just because you are in God's covenant community, just because you're a created angel, doesn't mean you're in. And if that's not enough, because you would say, well, I'm not Jewish and I'm not an angel, that doesn't apply to me.

Then he talks about unfaithful Gentiles. He says just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these, indulged in gross morality went after strange flesh are exhibited and as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire, right? Now, what happened in Genesis 19? You remember. God sent two angels. Two men came to the house to rescue Lot. And what happened in the city? There was so much gross immorality. There was homosexuality and infidelity and all sorts of things going on. I mean, it was just a sexually lascivious culture.

And as a matter of fact, Abraham was pleading with God and he was telling him, God, if there's 50 righteous people, will you please not destroy it? And God said, yeah. If there's 50 righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah, I won't destroy it. Okay God, how about 45? Yeah, for 45 I won't do it. Okay, God, I don't want to bug you, but if

there were just 40...

I mean, he gets it all the way down. And why did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? Because he couldn't find any righteous people there. So the two angels come into Lot's house and what are the men banging on the door to do? Bring them in out so we can have sex with them. They're angels. What were they doing? They were going after strange flesh.

God was saying that Sodom and Gomorrah had become so wicked that as Lot came out with his family, they told them not to turn back, not to even look and God reigned down fire. And he said, let me tell you this, this is an example of what's about ready to happen in this world. And the example is, is for those that are going to undergo punishment of eternal fire.

Now, I'm telling you this message is... whatever I'm preaching today is the most unpopular message. Let me tell you why. Because the most difficult doctrine to teach human beings is this, that you're completely depraved in your sin and that you're dead and that there's nothing you can do about it and because of that, God's wrath remains on your life. Nobody likes hearing that. We reject that, we refute that. We call people bigots that teach that. That is the most difficult doctrine to teach but nothing could be truer.

Because if you don't believe that doctrine, then why would you ever need Jesus? What do you need Jesus for? I know I'm depraved through and through. I know I was dead. I know God saved me. I know it was only through the cross of Christ. I need the

cross of Christ. I love the cross of Christ because I know how sinful I was. If you don't see that you're sinful, you'll think falsely. Your only need for Jesus is to have him bless your life, which won't do you any good, right? And why do we need him? Because there is an eternal fire.

Jude says there's an eternal fire. He's going to talk about it later in these 25 verses. Nobody, I mean it's rare when I hear somebody on television talk about a real place called hell that's eternal. Yet Jesus talked about it all the time. He's said it's a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. He said it's better to gouge your eye out if your eye causes you to lust than to end up in hell. He says better to cut your left hand off or your right hand off than to go to hell.

It's a real place where real people go by the thousands every single day and once you cross that chasm, you can never come back. It's a place of utter darkness. It's a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. And eternal hell is just as long as eternal life.

You say, well, how could God do that? You're asking the wrong question. Here's a better question. How could holy God that's so righteous and so good and so perfect, who can't tolerate sin and can't have any of it in his life, how could a God like that be willing to send his own son to die so that those who rebelled against him could be part of his presence? That's a better question to ask.

See, we start with the wrong premise. God loves everybody and do whatever you want. God starts with this premise, I'm holy and you're not. But I love you enough

to send my son and through the provision of his death, you can have life in my name.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, God Almighty, heaven and earth is filled with his glory.

Let me just tell you why this is so important. This is sobering. But because you're probably not going to hear this from many places, I don't mind telling you. If you've never trusted in Jesus Christ, you will spend eternity in hell. It is not a place where you gather with other people in fellowship. It's a place you'll be all alone. It is a place of eternal torment. It is a place of darkness. The Bible defines it as a place you never, ever want to go.

The Bible also says in Matthew 25:41, God did not create it for you. He created it for the devil and his angels. God did not create hell with you in mind. He didn't create you to go to hell. God created you to be in relationship with him, but because of your sin, that's where you're going. Not just because of the bad things you've done, but because of the bad thing that you are, that's demonstrated the bad things that you've done. And it's as eternal as eternal life is.

So it's pretty sobering because you better think about it because anybody who dies apart from Christ, that's where they spend all eternity. Now I've officiated a lot of funerals. I've never gone to a funeral even when a non-believer is buried and everybody knows they're a nonbeliever. I've never seen an officiate stand up and say, well, we know Joe's in hell. He should have repented. You should repent too. I've never seen that. We're too kind.

So I'll say something like this when I'm at a funeral. Joe's not here right now, but

if he were, if he would rise from the dead, he'd tell you a couple things. Number one, heaven and hell are real places. And number two, the only way you'll ever experience heaven is to repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ. That's what he'd tell you if he were here today. That's what everybody would say, right? Here's my question. Have you trusted and repented in... Have you repented and trusted in the Lord, Jesus Christ?

See, for those of us who are saying that we're eagerly awaiting his return, when Jesus Christ bursts out of the sky and you see all of his glory in colors that we've never even seen before, with sounds that we've never even heard, with sites that we've never even seen, with all the angels coming with him, with the power like we've never even experienced, we're going to be like, holy, holy, holy. If you don't know the Lord, holy maybe the first word your mouth, but it's not going to be the second. Likely not the second.

Because at that moment in time, it's done. There's no repenting at that time. There's no getting right with Jesus at that time. There's no I need to learn more about God at that time. There's just like, time now. And what Jude was so passionate about was, this is the faith that was once for all entrusted that God sent his son to be the savior of the world. Hear me.

Jesus Christ came not to make you more religious. Jesus Christ came to save you from your sins. Jesus Christ came so you could have a relationship with him. Jesus Christ says, you need to give your sin to him and receive his life because you're dead. And some of you here today, some of you've even come to brave church for a long

time, you're not believers. You're outsiders. You've had little encounters but there's never been a moment in time where you can say, I know that I know that I know that I believe.

Now you may not remember the exact date like I do. Mine was July 9th, 1989, where I know I crossed over from death to life. I know I repented and needed Jesus. You may not know the exact date, I get. You may be in a timeframe that, hey it was during the fall of this year, that my life changed because I realized that was a sinner and I needed... I mean, you don't need to know the exact date, but by my goodness, there has to be a change in your life. If you've lived your life without Jesus being Lord, when did he become the Lord of your life?

So the way I wanted to end our service today, before we take communion, is to give you the opportunity to do that. See, for some of you here today, you just need to be reminded of who you are in him and all the benefits and the blessings you have from your identity. And some of you here today need to realize that some of the people that you listen to, they don't even love Jesus.

Because if they did, how come they never talk about him? How come you never hear them talk about the cross? How come you never hear them talk about his resurrection? How come you never hear them talk about his glory? Because they don't love him, right? And some of you here today need to be reminded that God only saves believers and some of you need to know you're not. You're not. You never place your faith and trust in Christ, but here's what God would want you to know. He loves you

with an unconditional love. He wanted you to hear this message so that you'd repent and trust in him and him alone.

So I want to end by praying this morning before we take the elements of communion. Would you just bow your heads and close your eyes? If you're a believer here this morning, I'm just going to encourage you to pray for those who are wrestling with the decision that God's impressing on their heart.

Lord Jesus, we come before you right now. Lord, this is a hard message. Jude does not mess around. He pulls no punches. Lord, he's calling us to contend earnestly for the faith. Lord, some of us this morning, we just thank you that we were reminded of our identity and we need to experience more mercy and grace and peace and truth. And Lord, some of us need to be reminded that some of the things that we're filling our ears with are not glorifying to you because the people that are talking aren't talking about you, they're talking about self-help. They're not talking about God honor.

Lord there's some of us here this morning who recognize I've never trusted in Jesus as Lord. I've never let him come into my life and rule and reign. If that's you, here's how you can pray this morning. Just pray after me.

Dear Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. But I believe you died on the cross for all my sin and that you were buried. And I also believe that you rose from the dead. And right now where I'm sitting, Lord, I confess that you are my Lord and savior. And I believe in my heart that God raised you from the dead. I invite you into my life to take it over. Please forgive me of all my sins.

Lord, I pray for those who genuinely pray to receive you, would have life and they'd have it in your name. And Lord, as we get ready to take communion today, as we each take a cup and bread, as the cups are stacked on each other, Lord, I pray that as we hold them in our hands and we hear the music being sung over us, that we'd be reminded of how much sin you've taken out of our life and how we've been made new in your name. Lord, we give you all the praise in Jesus name, amen and amen.