

REMEMBER WHAT YOU KNOW

JUDE 5-11

But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

I once watched a CNN Interview where a panel of reporters were firing questions at a popular TV preacher.

The CNN interviewers all advocated for acceptance of the LGBTQ lifestyle, and were doing their best to coax this famous pastor into a debate on homosexuality.

They had him on the hot seat. Several times this pastor tried to state the biblical view that homosexuality is a sin, but when he went there the interviewers pushed back, and he would become ambiguous about what the Bible teaches. Clearly, he didn't want to take a stand.

The pastor kept saying, "I don't really talk about that. I want to lift peoples' spirits, and help them reach their potential." He added, "I just try to stay in my lane."

And I'm afraid this pastor's statement is the strategy of today's evangelical church in general. We choose subject matter that's noncontroversial and acceptable to cultural tastes - *stuff like self-improvement and human potential, and positive thinking, and self-actualization, etc., etc.* - we don't dare deviate from what sells!

Churches today find what tickles people's ears, and keeps them coming back, and they "stay in that lane."

If it's pleasant and agreeable they'll talk about it, but they go to great lengths to avoid difficult subjects, and unpopular positions. Some pastors refuse to get penned down and take a stand on what might get disputed.

Like the preacher being interviewed by CNN, pastors today take the approach, "Hey, we only talk about what lifts people's spirits... we just want to stay in our lane."

We forget that the Christian gospel is both good news and bad news. The word "gospel" means "good news."

But **the good news** begins with **bad news** - *you're a sinner, your nature is twisted, your life is opposed to God, your damned to hell with the devil and his demons.*

And it's only after you've agreed with the bad news, that you're ready for the good news: *Jesus can forgive your sins, He'll unravel your twisted-ness, He'll make you acceptable to God, and deliver your soul to heaven.*

It's true, sin **is** an unpleasant subject. *Especially when you start naming specific sins... Even more so when you start listing my sins...* Exposing sin causes us to squirm.

But until my illness is diagnosed, why would I accept the cure? If “my lane” as a pastor is only what flatters, and uplifts, and affirms; then I'll never address the sin that's holding us back. There's no reason for *the good news to be received*; unless *the bad news is believed*.

And this is why Jude decided to steer out of his lane.

He writes in verse 3, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” Notice, Jude's original intention was to write about their “**common salvation.**”

I'm not sure what all that would've included, but I imagine Jude would've extolled *God's amazing grace, and the completeness of His pardon, and the sealing of His Spirit, maybe a listing of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit, perhaps a description of our home in heaven.*

There would've been very little in the letter Jude started to write that would've been offensive or upsetting to his readers. His original thoughts were agreeable.

But unlike the preacher on CNN, and many other pastors today, Jude was willing to steer out of his lane.

He realized there were problems in the church that couldn't be ignored. There were issues that needed to be addressed. Carnal teachers and false doctrine had infiltrated the church and were threatening God's people.

Silence was not an option! Jude needed to speak out even if what he said made people feel uncomfortable.

Recently, on Wednesday nights we've been teaching through the book of Acts. We'll pick back up after our summer recess. The story of the growth of the early church is formally called, "[The Acts Of The Apostles.](#)"

But if you keep reading through the NT, the post-Acts epistles reveal a back story. For as the apostles spread the Gospel - apostates or heretics, false teachers - tried to contaminate the Gospel they were spreading.

The word "[apostate](#)" means "[to fall away.](#)" There were backslidden believers who had retreated from the true faith, and were taking other unsuspecting folks with them. Jude saw that false teachers were alive and well.

In fact, rather than "[Acts Of The Apostles,](#)" you could call Jude's message, "[The Acts Of The Apostates.](#)"

Rather than stay in his lane, his brothers and sisters were being deceived so Jude had the courage to sound an alarm. He came out of his safe zone, to address the evil he saw, regardless of the awkwardness it caused.

Rather than describe their "[common salvation,](#)" Jude "[found it necessary to write... exhorting \(them\) to contend earnestly for](#)

the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints.” Thankfully, he wasn’t afraid to leave his lane, even when it created conflicts and hurt feelings - even if it caused tensions and angry rubs.

There are times when every pastor needs to leave the safe lane, and enter the danger zone where only one opinion can prevail... where only one way is the right way... even when doing so risks crashes and collisions.

Last month I was invited to New Zealand to speak to the CC pastors. While there, Kathy and I decided to take some vacation, and enjoy the beautiful countryside.

We rented a car and tooted around the islands. And three features are unique to traveling in New Zealand...

First, you drive on the wrong side of the road. You’re constantly telling yourself, “keep left.” Second, there are lots and lots of round-a-bouts. The Kiwis love their round-a-bouts. And third, for some inexplicable reason, New Zealand has hundreds of single lane bridges.

Apparently, the New Zealand DOT is too cheap to spend a little more money and build a two-lane bridge.

And for an American who’s use to a world of multi-lane bridges, the first few times you pull out onto a one-lane bridge it’s a little disconcerting. You feel a bit uneasy.

On a two-lane bridge there’s room for two vehicles traveling in opposite directions. But not so, on a one-lane bridge. Put two cars on a uni-bridge - *one heading north, and the other traveling south* - and there’s no such thing as an equality of

cars. Pluralism doesn't work on a one-lane bridge. Either there'll be a crash, or a stand-off.

There's not room for both cars to pass simultaneously. *And there are times when life is like a one-lane bridge!*

Two opinions can't pass simultaneously, as if both are equally true. The two ideas will either crash, or force a stand-off - but both can't be right simultaneously. One-lane means somebody is right and somebody is wrong.

And not just every pastor, but every Christian at times needs the courage to pull out onto a one-lane bridge.

We need to take a stand for what's biblical and true - with our relatives, our co-workers, our neighbors...

God has revealed His will to mankind. And in many situations He leaves no room for multiple-conclusions.

We can't be afraid to pull out into the single lane just because we might crash with someone coming the opposite direction, or face a stand-off. Hey we can be polite - let them pass, and then us pass - but we're both not going to cross equally and simultaneously.

Well, rather than stay in his lane, Jude was willing to pull out onto that one-lane bridge - even if it meant losing a friend, or slowing down the growth of his church, or alienating a group of people, or inciting opposition.

Jude trusted God, and realized his job was to be faithful to God's Word, regardless of the circumstances.

And so, Jude begins in verse 5, “But I want to remind you, though you once knew this...” Jude isn’t going to tell his readers anything new. His letter was a reminder.

Compare the next few verses in Jude with 2 Peter 2, and you’ll be surprised by the similarities. Some scholars believe Jude actually borrowed from Peter.

Which is not a problem. Don’t be shocked that one biblical author might’ve borrowed from another. When it comes to biblical insights we’re all borrowing... **we’re ultimately borrowing from God Himself!** In reality, all truth is God’s truth - it all originates with Him!

And if something God gives me helps you *live it out* or *say it better* - then by all means use it for His glory.

I’ve heard it said, “Originality is the art of concealing your sources.” It’s like the guy who once said, “I’m determine to be original or nothing.” *And he was both.*

If you want to communicate something I’ve said to someone else here’s how you do it... The first time you quote me you say, “As Sandy Adams once said...”

The next time you say, “As a wise man once said...”

The third time you say, “As I have always said...”

It’s possible Jude borrowed from 2 Peter to reiterate warnings to his readers that they already knew... **Yet sadly, how often do we forget what we know?**

I have a son who is an industrious young man. He was a great athlete, but that’s just the tip of the iceberg...

He works with wood, and changes his brakes, and remodels houses, and coaches Little League, and does chores for his mom his dad doesn't want to do, and even sells fertilizer. Nick is a renaissance man. If anyone knows you need to keep oil in a car, it's my son, Nick.

And before I let him drive my precious, Toyota Corolla, the one with the sunroof - the one I really, really liked - I reminded Nick, "Son, it burns a little oil, so when you pull into a service station, check the gas, but fill it up with oil."

Yet guess what happened?

I suppose life got the best of the boy. He was going to college, and was probably dating his future wife. He was preoccupied with other stuff, because he never bothered to put oil in my Toyota, *and burned up the engine.*

He burned up one of my all-time favorite cars - the Toyota with the sun-roof. *Did I tell you it had a sun-roof?*

Yet Jude's readers made the same sort of mistake.

They knew all about *Israel's exodus from Egypt*, and *the unruly angels at the time of the flood*, and *the plight of Sodom and Gomorrah*. These OT stories were familiar ground. They'd heard them many times. They knew the morals of these stories, *but life had gotten the best of them*. The devil had lulled them to sleep and distracted them. **They had forgotten what they had always known.**

And in verses 5-7 Jude stirs up their memory.

Verse 5, **"But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of**

Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.” They knew that the very same people who died in the wilderness were those who had exited from Egypt.

They knew the story, but forgot the implications...

The Hebrews Moses led out of Egypt saw God work in miraculous ways - *the rod that turned into a serpent, the ten plagues, the parting of the sea*. But **they had the bad habit of listening to the wrong people...**

First, it was Edward G. Robinson - the little twerp in the movie who was always contradicting Moses...

Later Israel listened to the rebel, Korah.

Still later they listened to the ten doubting spies, rather than the faithful witnesses, Joshua and Caleb.

Whenever God does a work, the devil places an operative in close proximity to cast doubt and fear. The Hebrews who exited Egypt perished in the wilderness because they didn't follow the voices of faith.

And this was the mistake made by Jude's readers. They too, were listening to the wrong voices.

They'd been warned beforehand it would happen, but now that the false teachers were here, *they forgot*.

Jude warns them that just because you begin well, doesn't mean that's how you'll finish. ***A good start doesn't guarantee a happy ending.*** It's not just having faith that matters, as much as it is continuing in your faith. And if Jude's readers reject his warning, and fall away from their faith, they too will be destroyed.

We find another example of those who forgot what they knew in verse 6, “**And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day...**” Peter tells this story in the context of the days of Noah and the global flood.

Whereas, the Hebrews listened to the wrong people. These angels violated their God-appointed boundaries.

Now here’s where I want you to use your sanctified imagination. I’m going to make a bizarre suggestion.

Jude’s phrase “**angels who did not keep their proper domain**” is taken by some Bible scholars as a picture of fallen angels, or demons, who crossed a God-imposed barrier, and engaged in sexual relations with mortals.

Genesis 6 is offered as proof, “**Now it came to pass... the sons of God (which is a common biblical idiom for angels) saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one-hundred-and-twenty years."**

Fallen angels, or demons, appeared in the male form, and romanced the daughters of men. But it gets even more bizarre. I need some Twilight Zone music...

Genesis 6 continues, “**There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.**” These unlawful unions between demons and daughters

created a race of “giants.” These were a freakish hybrid - humanoids.

Of course, ancient mythology was full of gremlins and titans, and nymphs, and hobbits - where divine beings intermarried with human beings. Perhaps those legends were echoes of the actual “giants” in Genesis.

Understand, a major component of God’s creation was to separate. The Creator separated the light from the darkness, the day from the night, the waters above from the waters below, and God separated life - all living species reproduce after their own specific kind.

God placed biological boundaries between species.

Yet today’s geneticists are busy in laboratories developing methods to challenge those boundaries.

I read where the Salk Institute in California, a biological research group, is growing human organs inside animals, for transplant surgeries in humans. Hybrid humanoids could be right around the corner.

In a sense, the devil tried the spiritual equivalent in the days of Noah. And this was why God wiped out the human race, and locked the demonic culprits in the deepest parts of hell, reserved for a fiery judgment.

It could be, other than Noah’s family, the demons had contaminated the entire human gene pool. God took extraordinary measures to clean house and reboot. He destroyed all but eight people in a flood.

And realize the idea of sexual experiences with demons is not as bizarre a theme as you might think.

It appears in the occult. As well as, in UFO literature. And if you're like me, and believe some UFO sightings are actually demonic appearances; *then what about the alleged sexual abductions?* It could it be another instance of fallen angels leaving their proper domain.

This is also a favorite Hollywood storyline. A number of films have been about angels romancing women. As is often the case, at times truth is stranger than fiction.

Of course, Jude's point is less provocative than his illustration. These were angels created by God - they beheld His beauty, and peered into His glory - yet they chose to rebel and establish their own boundaries.

Now Jude warns us not to do the same!

And this is what you do when you look with desire at a woman who's not your wife, or covet your neighbor's new car, or take a drink when you know you'll get drunk, or embrace a doctrine you know is unbiblical, or rebel against the authority God has set over you... you are crossing God-established boundaries!

And false teachers encourage such rebellion. Jude is saying to you and me, don't forget the example of *"the angels who did not keep their proper domain!"*

And don't forget the example in verse 7, *"As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example,*

suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” Sodom and Gomorrah were OT cities situated near the Dead Sea. They were judged by God in a blazing inferno. In Genesis 19, fire fell from heaven.

Ezekiel 16:49 makes it clear that homosexuality was only one of Sodom’s sins. Pride, idleness, greed, apathy all played a part in provoking God’s judgment.

Yet here Jude focuses on her sexual perversions.

Which brings up lots of questions: *What does God say about homosexuality? Is it a sin? What causes same-sex attraction? Are people born homosexual?*

I understand there are homosexuals who don’t ever remember not feeling the way they feel. Our identity as male and female form very early in life. Sometimes childhood events beyond our control twist our psyche.

Some folks believe they were born homosexual. But realize, just being born a certain way doesn’t make it preferable... Being born with a birth defect, doesn’t mean we would celebrate the malady, and would never seek to overcome it if there was a means to do so.

In fact, even if folks are born homosexuals that doesn’t mean God designed them that way. We live in a fallen world, and proof of its fallenness is all around us - *from inexplicable cancers to random earthquakes.*

Our fallenness is evident even from our birth. None of us are born the perfect beings God created in Eden. We’re all genetically inferior to what God designed.

The Bible teaches us that every human is born into sin.

Every one of us inherits a sin nature from the first man, Adam. We are twisted and sinful from the start.

I believe we're all born with our **own** twisted-ness.

I think there's evidence that alcoholics are born with a genetic, physical propensity to alcoholism. Some psychologists suggest there's a gene that triggers violent behavior... But even if both theories are true, it still doesn't justify alcoholism or violence. We would help both persons overcome their sinful tendencies.

Today, LGBTQ activists want to make it criminal to help a person change their sexual orientation. *I'm afraid they're fighting against Jesus!* For **Jesus wants to unravel and untangle all our twisted identities.**

He wants to straighten out my twisted-ness - *and yours.* We all struggle with sin of some sort. Jesus calls us to trust Him. He has the power to overcome any sin.

Remember, the Bible teaches us from cover to cover that **gender and sexuality are God-given.**

And the Scripture is clear, homosexuality is a deviation from God's design. It's less than His best...

But here's what happens... We meet a gay person and discover they're nice and kind. We meet their partner and realize they too a nice, caring person. They both seem to love each other, and get along as well as some of the married couples we've met.

And we find ourselves forgetting what the Scripture teaches. We can love the person, but we still need to recognize what behaviors God considers to be sinful. *It's not our place to step*

over or reset the boundaries.

This is why Jude warns us, **remember what you know.** Sodom was a city that threw out God's order for sexuality. They interacted in unnatural ways. Jude uses the phrase, *"they went after strange flesh"* - and God judged the city of Sodom as a result of this behavior.

Today, there's no doubt God loves all people, regardless of what their sin happens to be. He loved us enough to send His Son to die on the cross to forgive us and unravel our twistedness. He offers forgiveness.

But God judged a city given over to its sin, and in doing so left no doubt how He felt about the behavior.

We won't be deceived if we recall what we know.

Verse 8 tells us, *"Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries."*

Back in verse 4, Jude mentioned the false teachers who had crept into the church unnoticed. They snuck in incognito. They disguised themselves as advocates of grace, but they'd turned God's grace into lewdness.

Always give it time... people reveal their true colors over time. Jude describes what these men really were..

They preached freedom in Christ, but in reality they indulged and defiled the flesh... Rather than see their body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, they treated it like an altar to Bacchus, the god of wine - or Aphrodite, the goddess of sex. They weren't about God's grace and glory. They were about their own selfish-gratification.

In addition, these false teachers were haughty and arrogant. They bragged that they served Christ, and not men. *Oh, they claimed to be free!* But their boast was just a smokescreen for a disdain for all authority.

They were arrogant. They had no fear of God!

Beware of folks who lack spiritual proportion.

People who speak of Almighty God in trivial terms, like *the man upstairs, or the Big Guy* - or people who crack jokes that belittle or caricature angels and demons in comic book fashion. The Bible says we're in a spiritual battle. Angels are our allies - demons our adversaries. If you want to be taken seriously as a Christian you should be serious about spiritual realities.

Jude uses an illustration in verse 9, “**Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.**”

Jude speaks of Michael's struggle with the devil as something we should know about. But this is the only place in Scripture it's mentioned. I'm speculating as to motive, but if the devil could've put Moses' corpse in the hands of the Hebrews it might've become an idol.

In Egypt the Hebrews were exposed to the art of mummification. *Would they have turned Moses into a mummy?* Given their tendency to idolatry, *probably.*

Thus, the wrestling match insured that didn't happen.

But Jude's point is the way Michael overcame Satan.

When God's archangel spoke to the devil, he wasn't haughty or presumptuous. He spoke in a measured way, and said simply, "*The Lord rebuke you!*"

This reminds me of preachers today who arrogantly attack the devil and his demons with all kinds of bombastic rhetoric. They shout at him and boss him as if they're his equal. Again, they lack **spiritual proportion**.

Don't misunderstand, I'm no fan of the devil.

I'd never say a nice word about him, but neither am I arrogant enough to call him out, and pick a fight.

The devil, though soiled and sinful, is still an angelic being, and he's powerful. In Christ, he's no match for me - but on my own I know I'm no match for him.

And this is why Michael, though an archangel - an angel with some rank and muscle - didn't shout vicious threats. Rather, he resisted Satan in a humble manner.

Michael made sure he kept Jesus between him and the devil. He showed respect for spiritual realities and the power of his foe. He said, "*The Lord rebuke you!*"

Never live in fear of the devil. 1 John 4:4 tells us, "**He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**"

James 4:7 assures us, "**Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**" But that doesn't give us the right to act arrogantly, as if we ourselves could take on the devil.

Whenever you encounter the devil always keep the Lord Jesus between you and him. Like Michael, *"The Lord rebuke you!"* is the appropriate response.

Then verse 11, *"Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah."* To keep ourselves from being deceived, Jude gives us three more illustrations to remember...

Steer clear of false teachers who come in *the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the rebellion of Korah.*

Remember, *the way of Cain was anger.* He was mad his brother's sacrifice was accepted and not his own. He got angry at God, and took it out on his brother.

Beware of an angry pastor. He won't last long. A servant of God should be motivated by love for God and love for people - not anger toward anyone.

The error of Balaam was greed. Remember, Balaam went divining for dollars. He was a soothsayer, a wizard, who was approached by the King of Moab to curse God's people, Israel. And he was willing to do so, for a fee. But every time Balaam opened his mouth to curse Israel, instead God put a blessing on his tongue.

But the king didn't pay for unfulfilled curses, and Balaam wanted the money, so he told the king how to get what he wanted. He said, round up your Baywatch girls and send them into the Israeli camp, and when the men of Israel commit adultery God will curse them.

Jude's point though, is beware of a greedy preacher!

He's always harping on giving, and preaching on tithing. The guy who is always finding ways to get into your wallet, you need to get him out of your life.

And **the rebellion of Korah was jealousy**. He couldn't stand it that God's hand was on Moses and not him.

Korah challenged Moses' authority, but to prove His hand was on Moses, God opened up the ground to swallow Korah. Korah and his crew bit the dust.

And Jude is warning us of the false teacher who has to dominate every event and always throw his weight around. Stay away from the power-mongering pastor.

By all means, avoid the **angry man like Cain, the greedy man like Balaam, the jealous man like Korah**.

Well, I hope you appreciate the fact that rather than deliver an easy sermon - perhaps on **"our common salvation"** - your pastor moved out of his lane a bit and dealt with some issues that needed to be addressed.

I hope you'll do the same in your interactions with your friends at work, and at home, and in the neighborhood.

Let's all be willing **"to contend earnestly for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints."**