

GOD IS MORE THAN LOVE

JUDE 12-19

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves.

They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Let me start by making two statements: the first, **God is love**, and the second, **God is more than love**.

There is a Bible verse that's become quite famous. 1 John 4:7-8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." These last words echo, "**God is love.**"

In many people's minds, God is love above all else. And there is no doubt, love is one of God's central traits.

But love is not the only characteristic God possesses. *He also cares about justice, and righteousness, and purity, and judgment, and retribution, and vengeance.*

Did you know that the Bible teaches that God *brings* harm to those who *cause* harm? Romans 12:19 is a strange verse to our ears, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." God avenges man's evil deeds.

Have you considered, **the God who is love is also faithful to even the score with those who act unloving?**

Maybe not, for it's true, the great fascination of the modern church is God's love. *And why this emphasis?*

I'm sure people have rationalized, if God is all about love - if love is all He values - *if God only cares about loving us, and not judging us* - then you can ignore the Bible's moral standards, and do as you please. This is why people today have **fallen in love with God's love.**

And nowhere is this more evident than in our music.

There is website titled, WorshipTogether.com. It's a clearing house for Christian praise and worship songs. And there's a search engine to help you locate lyrics.

This past week Matt and I conducted an experiment.

We searched for “**God’s love**” and found 653 songs that deal predominantly with God’s amazing love!

But how many songs come up when you plug in “**God a consuming fire?**” Just 31... How many songs contain the words, “**God’s wrath?**” Only 9... “**God’s jealousy?**” How about 5... “**God’s judgment?**” Just a measly 3... “**God’s anger?**” A mere 2... And “**God’s fury?**” Only 1...

And it gets worse. Our worship leader, Matt, has another database for songs we sing at CCSM. And of our 635 songs, nearly half - 304 speak of “**God’s love.**”

Whereas, just 24 of our songs speak of “**God’s anger.**” Four talk of “**God’s wrath.**” Three refer to “**God’s jealousy.**” And just two deal with “**God’s judgment.**”

Even our own church hasn’t escaped the climate we live in that is preoccupied with God’s love to the neglect of the other aspects of who God reveals Himself to be.

God is love, but lots of verses also speak of different aspects of God’s nature. And they are as descriptive of God as is His love. Like people, *human beings made in God’s image*, the Divine personality is multi-faceted...

Deuteronomy 6:15 tells us, “**God is a jealous God**”

Joshua 23:10, “**God is He who fights for you**”

Psalms 7:11, “**God is a just judge**”

Psalms 7:11, “**God is angry with the wicked**”

Here’s an interesting verse, that reveals a side of God not often mentioned. Psalm 144:1, “**The LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle**”

Daniel 9:14 “God is righteous in all the works He does”
Nahum 1:2, “the LORD avenges and is furious”
Colossians 3:6, “Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience”
Hebrews 12:29, “For our God is a consuming fire”

Put it all together and here’s what we learn about God, God is *jealous or desirous* of our devotion... God is willing to fight... God upholds justice and fairness... God is a judge Who punishes evil... God is angry at people who act wickedly... God is a preparer for war... God is right in all He does... God is a repay-er of evil... God is furious in dealing with rebellion... God burns with passion like a blazing fire... *And yet God is **still merciful, and gracious, and great, and good, and kind, and love!***

In Exodus 33-34 Moses asked God, “Please, show me Your *glory.*” So God appears to Moses on the mountain, and here’s how the LORD reveals Himself to Moses...

“Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” This is a passage we could turn into a song and sing! Obviously, at the core of God’s being, *He is love!*

But God is more... for He continues, “by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth

generation.” God promises not to ignore our sin, and He refuses to shelter us from its consequences.

A people’s sin even effects the generations that follow.

If you’ve ever been the parent of a teenager you know how these contradictory concerns reconcile in real life.

I loved my teenagers. They were fun to be around, and full of life, and risk-takers, and unafraid. *But were there times when I got furious with my teenagers?* Yes.

Did I ever get angry at their rebellion? You bet I did.

Did I judge their behavior? That’s a parent’s job.

And *did I hold my teenagers accountable for the consequences of their actions?* Yes, I certainly did.

And did the fact that I was furious, and I got angry, and I punished my teenagers when they were wrong - *in any way dilute or diminish my love for them?* Absolutely not.

In fact, my love and positive ambition for my teenagers probably inflamed my anger at their refusal to cooperate.

And in the same way there’s no contradiction between the two truths that **God is love** and **God gets angry with the wicked every day**. In fact, God gets angry *because* He loves us. If He didn’t love, He wouldn’t care.

And these seemingly contradictory characteristics get played out perfectly in God. God is “**holy**” - which means God is unlike any other. He’s in a category all by Himself.

Though His judgment is just and right, His love for those He judges is steadfast... Though His anger is inflamed by our

rebellion, He never stops loving the rebel... **God is love, but God is far more than love!**

And this is what many people just don't get.

They assume that since **God is love** He would never punish our behavior, or get angry when we rebel, or hold us to a standard and correct us when we fall short, or get furious when we lead others astray. *If God loves us why doesn't He just ignore our sin and let us live however we please?* But that's not the way God's love works.

Carlton Pearson was a popular Pentecostal preacher, who fell away from the faith. His denomination branded him a heretic. Netflix even did a movie about his apostasy. Sadly, it promotes his heretical conclusions.

Pearson caters to today's obsession for a god who is all about love - who would *never restrict us or upset us*. A god who allows us to be and do whatever we please.

Pearson now believes there is no hell. He concludes, *how can a truly loving God punish a person for eternity?*

In an interview he said, *"I couldn't reconcile eternal punishment with the moral character of a God of love. How can mercy endure forever and hell endure forever."*

And like so many other people today, Carlton Pearson is ignoring who God has revealed himself to be. God is *eternal love and eternal justice*. God's love doesn't cancel out His justice. And His justice doesn't negate His love. The two co-exist and work together in tandem.

Ironically, God loves every single person in hell, but reject the ultimate expression of His love in the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus - then you have to face His justice...

God is love **and** justice. **If God's love is supremely gracious; then its rejection is supremely condemnable.**

It's sad that we put God's love above all His other traits, and ignore the totality of who God says He is...

And where do people get these false notions of God?

This is where Jude enters the picture. He saw that there were false prophets and bogus teachers in the church who stressed God's love, but ignored His justice.

In verse 4, Jude spoke of ungodly men who creep into the church and **"turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."** Even in Jude's day there were false teachers who talked of God's love, while denying God's purity and authority.

Last week, we discussed Jude's warning to remember what we've been taught. False doctrine gains a foothold in softened memories - in minds that forget the Scripture.

Israel listened to the wrong people and they died in the wilderness - *where are we getting our counsel?*

Angels before the flood ignored God's boundaries and are punished to this day. *Are we respectful or resentful of the protective parameters God has placed around us?*

Sodom was destroyed because of sexual perversions. *Do we now condone the same practices for which God judged Sodom?...* Jude's point is don't forget the Bible and its lessons. God's principles never change. And this is true even when it

comes to God's character. Forget God's nature, and you'll end up following a false god.

In verse 12, Jude spotlights the false teachers who had invaded the church... Read the book of Acts, and Satan's initial strategy to derail the newborn church was persecution, but the early Christians showed a daring faith and an amazing courage. They weren't intimidated.

Thus, **where Satan can't intimidate, he infiltrates.** He creeps in. And Jude warns his readers to beware.

In verses 12-13 Jude paints five descriptive portraits of a person who's a detriment to a church. He wants his readers to be able to spot the traits of a truth-twister...

He begins in verse 12, **"These are spots in your love feast..."** Understand, much of the fellowship surrounding the early church revolved around *the love feast* or *Agape Feast*. It was the weekly pot-luck - *a community meal*.

Every Sunday when the church met to worship, part of their fellowship was the love feast. It was a time when *the poor were fed, believers were refreshed, and the church renewed its unity and caring for one another*.

The meal culminated with the taking of communion.

Yet there were attitudes taught and exemplified by these false teachers that spoiled and tarnished the feast.

Jude continues, **"while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves."** And this ominous indictment is all we need to know about these false teachers - they were **"serving only themselves."**

Understand, [when someone says they serve the Lord they may or may not be doing so.](#) *I don't want to discourage anyone with sincere motives. We need more true servants of God.* But there are folks who say they're serving God - *they get involved at church, they speak and act in His name* - yet their motive is selfish and self-centered. In reality, they serve themselves.

Their concern is not the welfare of the church at large, *they want to look good - or be first - or have their need met.* Their ambition is personal and self-centered.

Apparently, at the love feast you could see them, jumping to the front of the line. Clamoring for attention, scarfing up food rather than sharing. They had no fear of God. It's dangerous to *use God to serve yourself.*

In 2007 Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, who at the time was the head of the Senate Finance Committee, launched an investigation into six media-based televangelists - [Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Meyers, Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, Paula White, and the late Eddie Long.](#) All of whom taught a prosperity Gospel - *a falsehood that says all God's children should be rich.*

At the time there were legitimate questions as to whether the Senator and the federal government were overstepping their bounds. *What about the separation of church and state?* But what was worse, were the abuse of ministry funds and outlandish expenditures that caused Grassley to feel the need to investigate.

Tax-deductible donations had been used to purchase private jets, a Rolls Royce, a Bentley convertible, a \$30k conference

table, a \$23k commode with marble top... not to mention exorbitant salaries and bonuses.

It's sad that supposed servants of God, *by their outlandish expenditures*, gave the feds a reason to conduct a review of their ministries. **The real tragedy was that the world had to call out the church for its misuses, instead of the church calling out the world.**

The Church should be the watch-dog of corrupt practices. Instead, the world was barking at the church.

Remember Jude was Jesus' earthly brother. He knew His Lord Jesus had laid aside heaven's riches, to identify with the least and lowest. You better believe Jude would've conducted an investigation! Here he calls out those who were ***“serving only themselves.”***

But Jude has more to say about these false prophets, ***“They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds...”*** When we see clouds we hope for rain. A cloud symbolizes promise - water is on the way.

Yet these false teachers were *clouds without water*.

They promised the believers blessing, but the only person blessed by their ministry was themselves. Jude was angry that men would come and take advantage of God's people. Rather than feed the flock of God, these false teachers were out to fleece the flock.

And here's the lesson for us, we need to beware of people who are not what they appear to be. So many so-called believers today are *clouds, but without water*.

Some Christians are like Truffle Oil. *You know about truffles?* A truffle is a fungus that grows on tree roots. It's a cousin of the mushroom. Truffles are found in Spain and France. They've become a dining delicacy.

They can't be grown commercially, so they're very rare. Truffle-trained dogs have to sniff them out, while they're still in the ground. And as soon as they're pulled up they start to lose flavor. Thus, freshness is vital.

Truffles are now a very expensive culinary extra.

But here's the scam with Truffle Oil. Rarely will you find even a trace amount of a truffle in Truffle Oil.

It's olive oil with an artificial chemical that smells like a truffle. It has the aroma of a truffle, but it's not truffles... *And this is similar to many Christians. They're "clouds without water."* or "truffle oil without truffles."

These believers come with great promise. You think you know what's inside them, only to get hoodwinked.

This is why we need to beware of people... *that we date, or sit under their teaching, or put into leadership.* People are not always who and what they say they are.

But Jude also calls them, "late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots..." A fruit tree that blooms in autumn has had multiple chances to bear fruit. It's survived several growing seasons. Yet despite second and third chances it's dead and barren.

And there are people in the church just like these trees. They're shown great patience. Brothers invest in their lives. People give and give and give - *and they take and take and*

take - but there's no fruit. Even after numerous opportunities they still have barren limbs.

Jude is saying, there are people who've had chance after chance - and there comes a point where they need to be "*pulled up by the roots*" and cast aside.

Recall, **God is love, but He's more than just love!**

It's not that God is ever finished with us. As long as there's breath there's hope, but it may have to happen in another field, at another time, with a new attitude.

For the moment the person's roots are dead, and it has to be pulled up. Ultimately it needs to be replanted.

Verse 13 continues Jude's description of people who are a blight on the church. He calls them, "*raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame...*"

There are folks who make a splash in the church.

These people cause whitecaps of activity and waves of ministry, *but no real Kingdom work is accomplished.*

Their splash was superficial. You could say **some people have a ministry that's all foam and no fruit!**

Whenever I go to Firehouse Subs I like the FreeStyle Coca-Cola machine where you can design your own soda. You can pick your drink; then add a flavor, etc.

But it takes forever to fill your cup! There's too much foam. I have to let the foam settle, to fill up my cup.

And this is what you learn to look for in a servant of God. Some folks come with too much foam. They want to discuss

what they're doing, and what they once did, and how spiritual they are, *ad nauseam*. That's foam!

Other people just do it! They're flavor, not foam. This kind of servant is a breath of fresh air. **They serve!**

Jude saves the most vivid description for last.

They were like “wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” These false teachers were like shooting stars that dart across the night sky. They flash against the heavens for a moment - a second - but end up sailing into oblivion.

These are people who lack staying power and commitment. They're here today and gone tomorrow.

They came into the church with a splash, claimed to be a “star” - but in the end they were a “shooting star.”

I'll never forget a woman who attended our church. She was speaking to a friend who told me about their conversation. She said, “I can't believe you've been at this church for twenty years. As a matter of principle we attend a church for four or five years; then we find another.” And I would say that person is missing out on a big part of what God designed the church to be.

You don't build substantive fellowship overnight.

Often it takes enduring mutual trials. *Weathering the storm - not running for shelter*. The real stars in the firmament of the church are those that persevere!

Once a woman went on a new diet - the **All Garlic Diet**. Every morning she ate a garlic sandwich. At noon it was garlic for lunch. *Garlic-y* food for dinner as well.

In the end the woman didn't lose any weight, but people said she looked a lot smaller *from a distance*.

That was Jude's take on these false teachers. They looked good - they had style - but they lacked spiritual character. They were *all show*, and *no substance*. They might've looked good at a distance, but not up-close.

Jude writes in verse 14, "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." *This verse blows my mind.* Look at how Enoch is identified. He's "*the seventh from Adam.*"

Now that dates a guy! You lived a long, long time ago if your generation was shouting distance from the first man, Adam... *And what did ancient Enoch preach?*

This is what amazes me... Enoch didn't talk about Jesus' first coming, though he live 2200 years before Jesus was born *to save us and demonstrate His love*.

Even before His first coming, Enoch spoke of Jesus' Second Coming when He returns to earth with 10,000 of His soldier-saints to execute God's wrath on this rebellious planet. Enoch was focused on God's brutal judgment, even more so than His amazing grace.

Certainly, 1 John 4:8 is true, **God is love.** And His love was seen most vividly in the ministry and sacrifice of His Son. But before Jesus came to earth, and long afterwards, God is also holy, just, and willing to judge.

God is love, but God is more than love!

I heard a story from World War 2. Deep behind enemy lines a German SS Officer was standing patiently, with a machine gun cradled in his arms. He watched a bearded, Hasidic Jew dig his own grave.

When the Jew was done, he turned to the Nazi soldier and said, **“God is watching what you are doing.”** And with that he was gunned down in a rain of bullets.

Apparently, that German soldier **didn't believe what the Jewish man told him...** Neither did Hitler, or Stalin, or Chairman Mao, or the Muslim government of Sudan, or the Hutus of Rwanda, or the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, or Kim Jong Ill of North Korea, or the rival factions in Syria, or a host of other cruel regimes.

But it's true! There is a God who is **“watching what you are doing.”** And in the end, He will right all wrongs, *for to love the violated is to punish those who violate.*

Jude continues his expose' on the false teachers in his day, **“These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage...”**

False teachers are not contented people. They're not satisfied with God's blessing - *they want more!*

And they'll tell people what they need to in order to get **more... more money, more members, more attention, more glory - it's not about God, but more...**

Beware of the Christian who grumbles and complains under his breath - for when he opens his mouth it's a game. He's out to get something. He'll speak whatever is necessary to fulfill his ambitions.

Rather than teach the Bible honestly, *and let it speak for itself* - shrewd, unscrupulous pastors will use the Bible to fulfill their agenda and foster their scheme.

Jude tells us they use *“great swelling words,”* and *“flatter people to gain advantage.”* There's no integrity in their parsing of the Scriptures. They twist the Bible to please and convince their listeners. Such preaching is actually manipulation. *No wonder Jude was outraged!*

One year I received a card that read simply, *“Thank you for teaching God's Word and not a lot of other stuff.”* My goal is to make that always true. The Bible doesn't need a pastor's spin. I want to preach the unadulterated Word of God - give it to you straight-up!

And then verse 17, *“But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.”* Again, Jude reminds his readers that they've been forewarned...

There are influencers in every church who are more *sensual* than *spiritual* - more *lustful* than *loving* - more *committed to themselves* than *to God* - and more attune to their *physical appetites* than *biblical attitudes*.

Sadly, the world can still influence even at church!

And under this kind of self-centered, self-absorbed leadership the church fractures and splinters. Self-seeking leaders drive the church apart. Too often *cracks in the church* are caused by *crackpot leaders*.

Godly, unselfish, servant-hearted leadership is what binds a church together. When leaders submit to God and to each other - and follow the truths of the Bible - the people of God follow suit and remain united.

Jude reminds his readers and us, that Jesus Himself, and His apostles, predicted that in the last days *“mockers”* would infiltrate the church, and teach people to walk according to *“their own ungodly lusts.”* I believe *“the last days”* are here, and that mockers abound.

That includes the former mega-church pastor from Grand Rapids, Rob Bell. Sadly, Rob turned his back on many of the truths he once believed, including his confidence in the Bible. We should pray he repents.

Recently, Rob mocked the sufficiency of Scripture, when he made the comment, *“the church will continue to be even more irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense.”* *That’s an insult to the Book of books that has literally changed my life.*

Rob Bell wrote a book entitled, *“Love Wins,”* where like Carlton Pearson, he advocates for universalism - *that there is no hell - that everyone ends up saved.*

In the book, Bell makes the comment, *to say God will send a person to hell, is to turn God into a “monster.”*

But I like the review of Bell’s book that appeared in the Christianity Today magazine. It was more a critique of the theological liberalism that has infiltrated many of today’s mainline Protestant denominations. It recites a prediction by Richard Niebuhr, where he warned of a Christianity that preaches *“a God without wrath, trying to bring men without sin, into a kingdom without judgment, through the ministry of a Christ without a cross.”* But notice the fatal launch point, *“a God without wrath.”* A God that’s *all about love*, and nothing else.

This is the seed of many of today’s heresies.

Christianity Today goes on to defend the Bible’s teaching, *“When all is said and done, there is no painful contradiction between the love and justice of God. In the end, not only does love win, but justice, too.”* In short, *God is love, but He is more than love.*

Don’t forget the Scriptures, and let anyone turn the true God into a diminished God. His wrath, His anger, His judgment are as much of who God is, as His love.

This may not be the God you want, but it’s the God that is... For all eternity God is both loving **and** just!