

If you've ever experienced somebody believing in you, you know what it feels like, especially if you had gone through a season of rejection or whatever, or you didn't think you had a whole lot of value, and then someone comes up to you and says, no, I see in you much more than you see in you, and they actually pay a little bit of attention to you, you would run through a brick wall if that were the case, right?

So I wanna give you a story of someone who had a similar experience outside of the scriptures so we can kind of learn from something we know, and again, apply it in something maybe we don't know because the book of Jude, for most people, is something we don't know.

So here's how we're gonna start. We are going to begin with the story of a football player. I've just celebrated my first anniversary of being called here to King of Kings, and I've only once used an NFL story. So so far, I'm good, I can use one more.

I'm gonna start with a picture of a guy that you see here. He's a high schooler. He basically looks like every high schooler that's high schooling in football right now. There's nothing particularly special about the build or anything about this dude. But he really wanted to play, and he felt like he could play after high school.

But this guy was a zero star recruit, meant no one was looking at him. No one was gonna keep a position open on their roster. No one loved the idea of having him play on their team. No one called him to come and play.

So this guy was like, well, I'll enroll in a JUCO, a junior college, I'll get a little bit of time under my belt in a smaller school, and then people will see me. Well, he's going to such a small school, nobody saw him playing.

So what he did is he put together a package of his highlight reels from high school in his first year, and he sent it to 1,000. Not 10, not 100, 1,000 higher level colleges. To say, hey, could you keep a spot open for me? Would you give me a call? I would love to be on your team.

And you wanna know how many people called and followed up as a result of that 1,000 messages gone out? Zero, not one college thought that he was worth going to a higher level.

Well, one day a scout actually did show up at his junior college, and you'd be like, oh, great story, except they came to scout somebody totally else, like not even this guy.

But the University of Wyoming scout that was there happened to see him play one of the games of his life. And so they did call, and they said, we would love to have you, and we will keep a spot open on our roster.

Now, the first year this guy gets the opportunity to play, I would love to tell you the rosy story of everything was wonderful and perfect and made up of rainbows and unicorns and all other stuff.

But instead, in the very first season, he gets a chance to play for University of Wyoming, he breaks his collarbone, can't play for the rest of the season.

But the next season, when he comes to play, he wins the division as their quarterback. That's great right there.

The season after that, he takes them into an even higher place. He goes to a bowl game that I know all of you watch every year.

What's the most popular bowl game? No, he won the potato bowl, legit. But still, it was a really big win for him. And he actually started getting national attention.

And that's when NFL teams started paying attention.

As he was coming out of the University of Wyoming, the Buffalo Bills selected him. They said, Josh Allen, we would love in this call to place you and keep you on our team.

And since then, this guy has thrown for on average about 4,000 yards passing every single year, about 500 yards rushing, so just him running by himself every single year, and has contributed to 40 to 45 touchdowns, either through his leg or his arm every single year for the Buffalo Bills.

Because somebody called him, kept a spot open for him, and let him know that he was loved and cherished, and he would run now through a brick wall for the team that would do that for him.

Now, I know I'm in Chiefs country, and there's a big rivalry between the Bills and the Chiefs, but guess what? I'm a Packer fan, so I don't care.

But this is a good example of someone who was called, loved, and kept, and he was willing to do anything than for those who did that for him.

And that's what I want you to remember as we move into a book that we don't often know, and that's the book of Jude. Say, Jude the dude.

All right, you're never gonna forget it now. You're gonna go past it. You're gonna be like, I'm looking for revelation, but you're gonna go to Jude, and you'll be like, Jude the dude, so you're gonna have to read it.

It is very short. It's one chapter. The amount of verses is in the 20s. You can read it in less than five minutes, but we're gonna teach through it today, because if you know what Jude is talking about in his church, you're gonna see that we have similar problems in our church, and the corrective for Jude is gonna be the corrective for us. So this is an incredibly practical book for us to walk through.

Now, I told you last week that throughout the sermon series, I'm gonna give you a Bible snapshot on each one of these books so that you can just write them down in your Bible. That's why the house lights are up a little bit during this season, so that you can actually read the scriptures, follow along, and take notes.

So here we go. Jude was written around 65 to 80 AD, which means it's shortly after the resurrection and then ascension of Jesus.

Now, notes on the author of who Jude is. Jude identifies himself in the opening of the letter. You heard it read to you in our invocation for service today as a servant of Jesus and a brother of James.

Now, there's only three James that are listed in the scriptures. There is James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee. They're also called the sons of thunder. That is the tattoo that I would like to get someday. I wanna be thunder, and I want all my sons to be called the sons of thunder. That'd be awesome.

But that's James. And that James dies in the beginning of the book of Acts. So not that James with this Jude. That's James the greater.

There's James the lesser, who is the son of Alphaeus, a very close follower of Jesus with the disciples. But it's not that James either. That James has an entirely different responsibility.

There is only one other James listed in the scriptures, and it's in Mark chapter six and the other synoptic gospels that are close to that one, parallel passages, where it lists the biological brothers by name and sisters of Jesus. Like not some other Jesus. I'm talking about the Jesus, the one that we worship and praise.

And so in all likelihood, the person who's writing this letter is the brother of Jesus.

Now think about how he chooses to disclose himself. He's not saying, listen to me because I'm the brother of Jesus. He doesn't say that at all. He says he's a servant of Jesus Christ, a brother of James.

He doesn't appeal to status. He is a humble servant under Jesus.

All right, so that's the author, that's Jude.

Why is he writing this book? Well, the first thing is false teachers have crept in.

And what I wanna tell you about right now is that when it comes to terrible teachings and terrible heresies that you find within the history of church, not one of them has come from outside of the doors of the church.

Every single damnable teaching, and I mean that like in the proper way, heresy, false teaching, damnable teachings, every single one, guess what? Has come from within the church.

And so that's what's happening in Jude.

Now in this book, he's gonna use a lot of Old Testament books, which is why many scholars believe that Jude was actually written to the church in Jerusalem first, and then it would be circulated to all of the other churches as well.

But because of his use of a lot of Old Testament imagery and characters, with the assumption that the reader would know what he's talking about, the majority of scholars believe that this is actually intended for that specific church in Jerusalem at the time.

And I just wanna take a moment to kind of like step outside of the sermon and put my teaching hat on, because Jude actually engages with some books that are not within the scriptures.

And I wanna be able to just take a second on that.

So he refers to two different books that you can't find in our Bible. One of them is called the Assumption of Moses, and it talks about how the Archangel Gabriel is contending for the body of Moses against Satan.

The other book that he refers to is the Book of Enoch. And that one actually has a lot of YouTube traction. There's a whole bunch of people talking about how great the Book of Enoch is.

It's not. And I don't mean that because I'm trying to suppress it. I mean it as in like, go read it for yourself.

And you'll find that the voice that you hear in the Book of Enoch is not necessarily the voice of the shepherd that you hear throughout the rest of the scriptures, with the exception of this one point that Jude brings up from that book.

So what he's doing is he's looking at books that other people have read, that they commonly believe in saying, those pieces are accurate, and let me teach from what you know to bring you to something that you don't know.

But just because he uses those doesn't mean the whole rest of the books are good.

Paul does this as well. In the Book of Titus, Paul quotes a Greek philosopher named Epimetides.

Now say Epi, no, I'm just kidding. I'm not gonna make you say that. I can barely say it. I practiced it like a dozen times in the van ride here.

But just because he utilizes that one Greek scholar's idea about how he views a specific group of people, that doesn't mean Paul endorses everything that that Greek philosopher actually taught, right?

That's the same thing that's happening here.

So now when you go to YouTube and YouTube is all like, this book Enoch, it's so wonderful, read it.

And you'll realize that it's not, except for the one point that Judah is bringing in here.

Because if you then focus on that, then you miss the main point of Jude, which is calling all believers to remain in God's love and in the mercy of Jesus to draw his church together.

And just like Obadiah last week, that small book ended in hope, this book also ends in hope where Jude actually says this is written to keep you, all of you and me from stumbling, from bringing up walls to alienate ourselves and remove us from the fellowship of other believers.

So now that you have all of that, we can actually get into studying this scripture for today.

So if you've got your Bibles, open them up to Jude verses one and two, because here we go.

Jude says this to his church, to those who have been called.

Say called.

Called.

Those who are.

Loved.

Say loved.

Loved.

And to those, or to God, the Father, and.

And.

And stay kept.

Kept.

For Jesus Christ, mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

Those three verbs are gonna be utilized throughout the rest of this teaching because they're the three most important pieces of what Jude is trying to teach his people.

That the church is called, that the church is loved by Jesus, and that the church is kept and guarded by Jesus away from all of these other distractions that are gonna come up to try to tear the unity of the church apart.

All right, so I'm gonna teach on each one of these words real quick.

Called.

Now, I'm old, so if you call me, in all likelihood, I will.

But if I am 20 or younger and you call them, what will happen?

They will not answer and you might get a text back. That would be great.

This is my relationship with my kids.

This kind of call necessitates a response.

This type of call that Jude is using, it's like a summons from a king.

There must be a response to this kind of call.

And in this case, this is the call of grace on every single person in Jude's church where Jesus is saying, I love you. I care about you. Respond to my love and my care.

You, here, now, are called in the same manner.

But you're also loved.

That's the next thing that Jude is gonna teach his people.

He starts very positively.

And I want you to know something special about this concept of love as well in the way that Jude actually chose a word to communicate that to you and to me and to his church back then.

And that word of love is not how tightly you grip onto Jesus because you think that maybe the tighter you grip on him, the closer you'll draw yourself to him.

No, this word of love is how tightly Jesus has gripped himself onto you.

And we try to kind of wiggle out of it, but he has grabbed onto you so tightly.

He loves you so dearly, so intimately that he is not gonna let you go.

You are loved.

You are called.

But finally, you are kept.

And the concept that Jude is gonna develop here is like a protection.

Like Jesus is saying, this person, you, that I put in my church, you've been redeemed to fulfill this role.

And I'm gonna guard and protect you so that you can grow in this role, so that you'll be the MVP in your church, not because of anything you're doing, but because of what I've done for you.

In this role, you will run through a wall, not because I want you to harm yourself, but because you have purpose and you've been redeemed here.

This is the kind of keeping and protection that Jesus has for Jude's church.

And this is the same kind of protection that he's got for you.

So for all of you who are here and you think I don't have anything to be able to provide or contribute to a church, yes, you do, because you also are kept.

You are redeemed to fulfill a specific role here in this place at this time so that the kingdom of God continues to move.

That is Jude verses one and two.

But there's a problem.

As are most of letters that are written to churches, you have a wonderful intro and then a problem that's going to be exemplified.

And that's what we have with the verses three and four.

So here, Jude, he's gonna do a gear shift.

He says, dear friends, although I was eager to write to you about the salvation that we share, called Kept and Loved, I felt compelled to write to you, to urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you.

Notice again, the problem of the church didn't come from outside of the church.

The problem of the church has secretly slipped in.

And the problem of the church is when the church doesn't do anything about it and the problems then persist.

Those are ungodly people, Jude says.

They pervert grace.

And that perversion of grace creates an immorality in life that says the teachings of Jesus, I don't have to abide by.

They don't mean anything.

And thus they deny Jesus as sovereign Lord over life.

So look here, when we're talking about, you know, the first church, the early church, we have this tendency to paint it with a rose colored glass and be like, oh, the early church was wonderful.

We only need to emulate the early church.

But that's not the case, especially when you read this, especially when you read like Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

There's a lot of stuff that is bad happening in the church.

This is why these letters are corrective.

And there are bad things happening in Jude's church.

And there are bad things that are happening in this church.

And there are bad things that are happening in the Christian church at large.

There are abuses from the top down.

There are conflicts from the bottom up.

There's sniping and backbiting from the peer to peer level.

It's not just happening in a church 2000 years ago in Jerusalem or wherever with Jude, it's happening right here, right now.

Right here, right now, where we would rather be focused on, elevated, financially blessed, rather than called, loved and kept.

And so Jude is gonna give three Old Testament examples.

We're gonna look at all three of them so that you can see his diagnostic in that church and our diagnostic then in this church in Jude 10 and 11.

He says, yeah, these people, those who secretly came in and those who tolerate them, they slander whatever they don't understand.

The very things they do understand by instinct like irrational animals do, it will destroy them.

Woe to them.

They have taken the way of Cain.

Say Cain, cause we're gonna study him.

They rushed for profit into Balaam's error.

Say Balaam.

We're gonna study him.

They've been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

Say Korah.

Korah as well.

We're gonna study Korah as well so that we can see.

This is what was wrong in the church Jude was looking at.

This is what's wrong in the Christian church right now.

So we're gonna start with Korah.

Numbers chapter 16 gives us a little bit of a view.

Korah was the son of Ishar.

He became insolent.

And this is at the time of Moses.

So Korah rebelled against Moses.

And with Korah were 250 additional Israelite men.

They were well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council.

So this is a bottom-up conflict that's happening.

Korah and all of the others, the 250 that were with him, they saw that Moses was put into the position he was put into.

That the Lord spoke through Moses.

That Moses had a specific job of being called, loved, and kept.

To lead all of God's people.

And he was quite faithful in that responsibility, even to this point.

But Korah didn't like the idea of someone having accountability over him.

Someone having leadership over him.

And so rather than humbly testing what Moses had to say to make sure it lined up with the scriptures, he rebelled and pushed off Moses.

Now here's the problem.

Because he was wrong in what he did.

He led 250 additional people from within his church, if you want to call it that.

And the way that the punishment occurred is that the Lord ripped the land open, which swallowed up Korah and the 250 following him, and it closed the land back up again.

To illustrate to those that there is a better way to address conflict with those that God has placed over you.

And in Jude's situation, the same thing was happening.

There were congregation members who were beginning to listen to those who had secretly crept in, teaching false doctrines and saying, that's right.

God's anointed ones are not teaching the scripture.

Let's throw them off.

That'll be great for the kingdom of God.

That'll be good for the mission of the church.

That'll be great for all of those people that are going out to spread the gospel.

If we continue to snipe, backbite, and bring down those who God has placed over us.

And the same thing still happens today.

And I don't even want you to think that this is just like pastors.

I mean, spiritual leaders, your Bible study leader.

How easy is it to go home and talk to your husband and be like, well, I didn't appreciate what they had to say because number one, it made me feel bad.

Number two, it convicted me in something that I should stop doing.

But number three, I am just gonna have some ad hominem attack about why I don't think that person should be over me.

And maybe I should take over the Bible study.

Wouldn't that be great?

No, but it's the same kind of thing that happens.

And you can either have a church that has those who are called, or you can have a fractured church filled with a bunch of Korahs.

And that's not gonna bless anybody.

So that was a bottom to the top conflict.

And that's called versus Korah.

Now we're gonna move to loved and then Cain.

Now with this one, we can read Genesis chapter four.

Abel kept flocks, Cain worked the soil.

In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as a wonderful offering to the Lord.

Abel also brought an offering.

He brought the fat portions from some of what part of his flock?

The first born, the first fruits, the most important.

The Lord looked on favor with Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering, he didn't look on favor.

So Cain was angry and his face was downcast.

Now here's the interesting thing.

Cain was actually loved by God.

Cain looked at, or God looked at Cain and Abel and saw objects of affection.

Cain responds in one way, Abel responds in another.

Now, if Cain and Abel were healthy within their church, within their family, they would be able to go with each other and say, oh, I brought this to the Lord and he has looked favorably upon that.

And then Cain could have been like, you know what?

You're right.

I need to bring up something better to the Lord.

And they would have been fine living together.

But instead, you know what happened.

Cain begins to harbor hatred in his heart that manifests as murder and he kills his brother.

Now, I'm not saying that Jude's congregation had like murderers running all over the place, but what do you think happens to somebody else's soul when you begin to drag them away from the life-giving word of Jesus?

It's the same thing.

And what do you think happens here?

When we should be lifting one another up.

Jesus says that those outside of the church should know us being connected to him by how unified we are when we're working and serving together.

Even if one of us sins, all of the rest should be looking to restore that person, to bring them back so that we're walking together as one in love, as a healthy church.

But that's not what occurs.

It didn't happen in Jude's church and it's not gonna happen in our church unless we're a lot more focused on Jesus than we are on each other.

Here's the last one.

This one's gonna be a little bit more controversial, but this is the story of Ket versus Balaam.

This is from Numbers 22.

That night, God came to Balaam and said, since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but only do what I tell you to do.

Balaam was supposed to speak for God.

That was his job.

And God said, you can go with those guys.

God did not say, tell them what they wanna hear because the king of Moab said, look, your God is always beating us.

Can you please speak a message that's gonna be against your God and what he's saying to benefit my kingdom?

And I will pay you a whole bunch of money.

So you've got a leader who is willing to compromise the truth of what the Lord is teaching for the sake of gaining more riches.

And if he was close to the Lord, don't you think that Balaam would have said, no, thank you.

I know what happens.

I've read the books that are already in circulation.

I know the stories, but no.

Instead, Balaam was more likely and did accept financial payment so that he could use gain over service to God's people.

In Jude's context, there were spiritual leaders who were blessed financially and pushing out those who were impoverished.

And you actually kind of see this happening too, where like, I'm just gonna say it, pastors.

Pastors who should be lining up with Jesus who said, foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head.

Like Jesus was functionally homeless during his itinerant ministry.

But instead we've got pastors who are wearing \$1,000 shoes, who have hundreds of \$1,000 worth of car collections, who have million dollar mansions and whose own estates are worth more than what they're giving to the homeless in their cities to make sure that actually people are cared for and the church is drawn together.

So you see this with Drewski and his mega church pastor skit.

And people from Christian churches at first were like, oh, what a terrible idea.

Oh, that's such an off-color skit making fun of the Lord's called ones like that.

No, the reason why people laughed at this is because they've experienced it.

And they see pastors and other spiritual leaders accepting gain over service where they're called.

So in Jude 12, 13 and 16, it says, these people, the Korahs, the Canes, the Balaams are blemishes at your love feasts.

They eat with you without the slightest qualm.

They're shepherds who only feed themselves.

And you notice the highlights there?

Your and you.

So he's talking to his church.

He's saying they're doing these bad things, but you, you're allowing it.

He's saying they are clouds without rain.

They have no purpose.

They're blown along by the wind.

They're autumn trees.

They don't have fruit.

They're just uprooted.

They're twice dead.

They're wild waves of the sea.

They foam up their shame.

They're wandering stars.

The blackest darkness has been reserved forever for them.

These people are grumblers and fault finders.

They follow their own evil desires.

They boast about themselves and they flatter others for their own advantage.

And I guess what I really want us to look at is that we all carry some Korah inside of us.

We all carry some Balaam inside of us.

We all carry some Cain inside of us.

And the job of the church is not to create distance between each other.

The job of the church is to go to Jesus and have him draw us more closely.

So in Matthew 7, Jesus talks about this distance we create as we judge one another and snipe and backbite.

In the church, he says, why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your eye?

How can you say to your brother, how can you say to your brother, oh, let me take the speck out of your eye.

Let me correct your wrongs when all the time there's a plank growing in your eye.

Maybe it's time to take the plank out of your own eye to see clearly and remove the speck from your brother's eye.

And so I would love for you to read Jude and have a moment of repentance where you can see what we can do with the planks that were jamming into each other's eyes.

Jude says this, you dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourself in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ as he brings eternal life.

He's saying the planks that we are so rife to stick in everybody else's eyes, the healthiest of churches have the Spirit pull each plank out of our eyes and begin to put one like this and one like this and see Jesus being built up in the church and taking our sins of Cain, Korah and Balaam to draw us together rather than separate us from each other because that's where those sins belong.

That's where those who creep in belong.

They belong on the cross and so do we, but we are not there.

Jesus is.

And because of that, the Spirit can build up his church.

He can build up you and me.

He gives us a specific purpose.

And that's gonna close us in Jude with verses 22 and 23.

He says to his church, the one whose planks have now built a cross, who have crucified the Korahs, the Cains and the Balaams.

And he says, you, all of you, me too, be merciful to those who doubt.

Save others by snatching them from the fire.

To others show mercy mixed with fear.

That's like reverence.

Hate even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

He's saying, look, you had a life that was different, that looked at church different, that looked at your relationships different, but in Jesus, you are different.

And Jesus' people coming together as the church is supposed to is not just for our own health.

Now, there are four verbs, three to start and one to finish.

Yes, you are called by God to be in this place.

You are loved by the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus in this place, in this church.

You are kept by Jesus himself to be active in this church.

But then at the end of Jude, we are called and sent with mercy so that we can take this message of reconciliation back into the world.

To those who have doubts, to those in the fire, to those who need mercy and to those who have been stained by the corruption of whatever it is that they're going through.

So you're called, say called.

You're loved, say loved.

You're kept, say kept.

And do not forget this last part.

You are sent, say sent.

You are sent with the gospel of Jesus.

And may this church, King of Kings, look a lot less like Jude's church and a lot more like Jesus's church.

Let us pray.

And I'd ask that you please stand as we do pray.

Lord Jesus, you are the one who calls.

You are the one who loves.

You are the one who's kept us.

We thank you for that grace.

We're just asking this moment that you would also have your spirit work and walk through us so that we are sent into this world to help so many others as a healthy church who follows you.

We ask this in your name and all God's people said.

Amen.