**Sunday 19th June Evening 2016 Message**

**Warning before the promise**

***Jude 3-25***

***Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. 4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.***

***5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home — these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. 7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.***

***8 In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings. 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals — these are the very things that destroy them.***

***11 Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.***

***12 These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm — shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted — twice dead. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.***

***14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.***

***17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.***

***20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. 21 Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.***

***22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.***

***24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy***

**Introduction**

The book of Jude ends with one of the great promises of the Bible. A promise that we seldom rely on, and possibly find it difficult to believe. Its stupendously amazing.

***24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.***

He, Jesus, is able to keep you from falling. Yet we fall, why?

He is able to present us faultless and with great joy to the Father. However, we know our faults and wonder how that will be.

The answer to those questions and doubts in our mind are contained in the opening warning which we will explore later this evening.

I do not know about you but I want to be kept from falling, I know I so easily fall. I want to be the joy of Jesus as He presents me to Almighty God/

**Transformed by the renewing of our mind**

Crucial to becoming like Jesus is our determination and willingness to be transformed. Paul in Romans encourages us

***Rom 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.***

This is not a matter of effort in positive thinking, memorizing of scriptures, and good spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading and fellowship, although these are all good and beneficial.

Your mind will only be renewed by experiencing the truths of the gospel and scriptures. The scriptural principles in themselves are seeds, they are born and grow when by the Spirit you experience the reality in your life.

We have minds that think soulishly, about ourselves, and are conditioned by our experiences. Your way of thinking and behaving has been formed by your earthly understanding, logic and experiences. Your spiritual thinking and behaving will be formed likewise.

That is why Jesus said ***Matt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."***

Repentance is not just about forgiveness, it is about changing your mind and lifestyle, from your earthly perspective, to that of the spiritual realities that Jesus demonstrated. It is about moving from your kingdom/domain of self to moving to His kingdom. When you decide to follow Christ you begin the journey of transformation and renewing your mind.

You can repent from expecting to be sick, to expecting to whole and healthy. The renewing of your mind takes place when you begin to experience Gods healing power.

You can repent from having a poverty mindset and expecting it to be hard to survive, towards expecting God to provide for all your needs. The renewing of your mind takes place when you experience His provision.

You can repent from having low self esteem, to embracing what God thinks about you. Renewing your mind as you experience His manifest love.

You can repent from believing you are powerless, to embracing the authority that Jesus has given a believer. Your mind will be renewed as you preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, multiply food supernaturally, walk on water – do the things that Jesus did.

**“Walking through the sword”** is a phrase and concept I heard used by somebody in an online sermon. It describes what we should be doing when walking by faith into the sWORD of God.

***Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.***

Jesus so often appears to hold a sword at our chest and invites us to walk toward Him, that requires an act of faith. Why would we do it? Because we know that the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is a sword that cuts and heals. The word of God that penetrates our very being restores us to Gods original design for mankind. The sword that separates soul and spirit, transforms our mind into the spiritual realm.

The sword sanctifies it separates us from our ways to His ways.

When Jesus invited Peter out of the boat, His words were like a sword held at Peters chest, the consequence of obedience would be transformational. Peter would realize that he just like Jesus, could defy natural laws, live in a supernatural reality, at the beckoning of God. Jesus walked on water as a human, with human limitations, but with a heavenly realm mindset. Just as last week Jesus could sleep through an earthly storm because in heaven there are no storms, He could walk on water because seas can be made of glass in heaven.

**Transformed by all of scripture (not just the nice bits)**

Jude a sobering book. Jude is not a book that is on believers regular reading list. Let me ask you have you read it in the last 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, can’t remember.

It is a book that is sobering, and challenging, if we allow Holy Spirit to apply it to us personally. It’s one of those books that annoyingly speaks of hell and judgement, when we would prefer to hear encouragement, hope, grace, mercy, forgiveness. Yet without maintaining an eternal perspective then the rest of our interpretation of the gospel can be distorted.

Heaven, hell, eternity and judgement are the due north, the compass point that helps us understand how we can navigate our way through life and the scriptures.

**General William Booth once said “I consider the chief dangers that confront coming generations is religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God, heaven without hell.”**

The gospel contained in our Bibles is understood and defined by past generations experiences and interpretation. We must contend for the original gospel as Jude encourages his readers. That gospel includes the sobering warnings. We have to feed on both milk and meat. The milk of the word, is easily ingested, pleasant and palatable, it soothes the spirit. However, the meat of the word needs chewing on and is often confrontational.

The confrontational elements of the gospel and the Word, requires us to walk through the sword. The sharpness of the Word is what removes our soulish desires and sets us into spiritual eternal supernatural reality.

Blessings and trials are put into perspective when heaven and hell are our eternal perspective, because that is what God is preparing us for. He is not just making there to soothe our spirits and make life easy for us whilst here on earth. He is in the business of transforming us to be like Jesus.

***Jude 3: Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.***

When we contend for the full gospel and not our own pick and mix, or the pick and mix of our stream of faith and past generations, we will not become like Jesus.

***Cutting planks by using the previous one as our measure, will eventually lead to planks of considerably different lengths.*** Christians have done the same with the gospel there are so many different understandings and experience because of experience and interpretation. Because Jesus does not appear to heal one person does not mean He has no desire to heal everyone, yet there are parts of the church that contend Jesus does not heal today. There are parts of the church that interpret every catastrophe as the judgment of God and ignore the fact that God desires that none should perish.

Today, the church is trying to make itself relevant by mirroring things in the world. The reality is that we are relevant when we model what the world needs. You are most relevant when you can model a family that works. You are relevant when you demonstrate the ability to forgive those who have abused and hurt you. You are relevant when you use the blessings and prosperity that God gives you to the benefit of others.

Jude writes

***4 For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. 5 Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.***

So we cannot ignore this and use grace as a licence to sin, Jude saw it coming, and the Bible warns God will destroy those who do not truly believe.

***In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.***

Was the OT forms of judgment removed by the new covenant, NO they were delayed so everyone had a chance to repent before facing a final eternal judgement.

We do not have time to focus on the types of people Jude says were in the church that he was writing to, but we can be assured that there are such people in the worldwide church today, and may be even in our midst this evening. Jude calls them blemishes on their love feasts and people who need lovingly correcting recognizing that even angels dare not rebuke but rely upon Gods judgement.

I encourage you to study this book at home later if you have not already done so.

Let us just take one verse from the book which lists the types of people you will find in most churches, and tendencies that we can all have from time to time. Jude acts on behalf of Jesus here and holds a SWORD at our chest and says come to me, let me separate these things from you.

***Jude 16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.***

Why couldn’t he just keep to murderers, homosexuals, theives etc. With God sin is sin, and He desires to renew us all into a kingdom of heaven lifestyle. So the invitation is to repent and be renewed to the whole lifestyle of the kingdom of heaven.

**How is Jesus able to keep us from falling?**

By our determination to contend for the gospel and the word of God, our willingness to let the sword pass through our lives. Jude preludes the great promise with verse

***Jude 20-23 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.***

He will prevent us from falling when we repent towards building ourselves up in faith, keeping in the love of God, and contending for the full gospel.