

Live Faithfully
Sunday School Lesson
Jude
November 16, 2025

Jude is proof that there were hell, fire, and damnation preachers even in the first century. Who is Jude? Jude identifies himself as being the brother of James which would possibly make him one of the half-brothers of Jesus. Jesus' brothers were not initially followers of Jesus. If you recall, Jesus' mother and brothers confronted him in the third chapter of Mark so there seems to be a strain as Jesus' ministry went public. After the resurrection, both James and Jude became active in the ministry of the early church.

Jude references many Jewish teaching which likely means he grew up going to synagogue but it also means his audience is familiar with the stories and practices so it was a community that contained at least some Jewish Christians. It is not a letter written to the general church but to a specific group of churches with a specific problem. False teachers and disciples had become a part of their congregation. The specific doctrinal issue is what is called antinomianism. What does that mean?

In some Christian belief systems, an antinomian is one who takes the principle of salvation by faith and divine grace to the point of asserting that the saved are not bound to follow the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments. In other words, grace is sufficient for your eternal place in paradise so it does not matter what you do on earth. You cannot lose your salvation. The distinction between antinomian and other Christian takes on moral law is that antinomians believe that obedience to the law is motivated by an internal principle flowing from belief rather than from any external compulsion, devotion, or need. Antinomianism has been considered to teach that believers have a "license to sin" and that future sins do not require repentance.

Our Purpose Statement: **To recommit ourselves to practices that build up the body of Christ and spur others on to greater love and faith**

The Apostle Paul tells the church at Philippi to "work out their salvation in fear and trembling." (2:12-13) This is in line with the Wesleyan understanding of grace. We define God's grace through Jesus Christ in three ways:

Prevenient Grace is the grace that goes before. When we baptize a baby or a young child, we are declaring that God is already at work in that child's life whether they recognize it or not. We are not declaring them "saved" but marked. We are making a commitment to see that child taught to know God, to understand God is love, to know Jesus as the ultimate self-revelation of God and to see God's sacrificing love in the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We are promising to model that love for them in Christian community. There are so many examples of prevenient grace in scripture such as Jacob and his dream. Jacob woke up and realized that God was with him even though he had not noticed it before.

Justifying Grace is the grace that puts you right with God. It is that grace that hears your confession and says, "You are forgiven." You no longer have to bear

the eternal consequences and the shame for your sins. Jesus has paid that price already. You have been redeemed.

Sanctifying Grace is the grace that teaches you to *love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength AND to love your neighbor as yourself*. This does not happen all at once but over a lifetime. Some people look at the law as list of rules to be checked off but that is not it at all. God's law is about relationships – relationship with the Holy Trinity, relationship with our self, and relationship with others.

The false teachers that were disrupting Jude's church with their antinomian teachings were leaving out the sanctification process where we "become". The author points out that Jude uses sets of three in his letter writing to help the church understand this process. The first set is three words include "called, loved, and kept safe." We have been invited or called into a relationship with God because we are loved by God. God shelters us in that relationship. We have the capacity to love because God first loved us, not the other way around.

The second set of three words include mercy, peace, and love. There are characteristics of someone who knows the love of God and tries to live in that love. Once again, this is about relationship. Being in relationship with God gives us peace because we have experienced God's mercy and love firsthand. We are able to share that with others resulting in a life that is not as self-focused and self-centered.

What is obvious from this letter is that Jude has a passion for the Gospel and he has a passion to keep it life-giving for the church and for the individuals and families that make up the body of Christ. As a result, Jude is "fighting" for the faithful. He knows there is no such thing as remaining stationary in our Christian journey – we are either moving closer to God or we are moving further away. Our faith must be active, be nurtured, and be practiced. Here are Jude's parting words:

But you, dear friends, remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They said to you, "In the end time scoffers will come living according to their own ungodly desires." 19 These people create divisions. Since they don't have the Spirit, they are worldly.

20 But you, dear friends: build each other up on the foundation of your most holy faith, pray in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep each other in the love of God, wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will give you eternal life. 22 Have mercy on those who doubt. 23 Save some by snatching them from the fire. Fearing God, have mercy on some, hating even the clothing contaminated by their sinful urges.

Let us pray:

O God, we confess we sin in thought, word, and deed by what we have done and what we have left undone. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to faithfully follow you as we strive to be a people who live in truth and love. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.