

## **“Beware of Sin”**

### **Jude 5-7**

Before we looked at the vision of Redwood Foursquare Church we were studying the book of Jude. We saw that it has a message that is relevant for even today. It is a book of warning. Jude tells us that there will be a day when the truth of scripture will be manipulated and made into something it was never intended to be. The truth of forgiveness, grace, and the authority of Jesus Christ today are in question. Mankind states that all truth is relative, dependent upon one's own interpretation. Mankind continues today to try to justify their actions or even their sin.

Today, I want to continue to look at Jude beginning in verse 5-7. Let's begin to read from verse 4:

*Dearly loved friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the truth of the Good News. God gave this unchanging truth once for all time to his holy people. I say this because some godless people have wormed their way in among you saying that God's forgiveness allows us to live immoral lives. The fate of such people was determined long ago, for they have turned against our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. I must remind you, and you know it well – that even though the Lord rescued the whole nation of Israel from Egypt, he later destroyed every one of those who did not remain faithful. And I remind you of the angels who did not stay within the limits of authority God gave them but left the place where they belonged. God has kept them chained in prisons of darkness, waiting for the day of judgement. And don't forget the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with sexual immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and are a warning of the eternal fire that will punish all who are evil.*

Jude was reminding the church that those who were ungodly will not escape God's righteous judgement, and then he goes on to give three examples. He writes so that today we would be reminded of the same. Peter does the same in **II Peter 2:4-6**:

*For God did not spare even the angels when they sinned; he threw them into hell, in gloomy caves and darkness until judgement day. And God did not spare the ancient world – except for Noah and his family of seven. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. Then God destroyed the whole world of ungodly people with a vast flood. Later, he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into heaps of ashes and swept them off the face of the earth. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people.*

## 1. The Example of Israel (vs. 5)

A well known event in Israel's history is the exodus of God's people out of Egypt.

A couple of years ago a movie by the name of "The Prince of Egypt" was an excellent example of this story. Although not entirely accurate the power and authority of our God was well illustrated. For me it brought inspiration to my own view of God. How great it would have been if history would have just ended like the movie ended. It showed Moses receiving the 10 Commandments and overlooking the children of Israel.

But history continued and as you read through the rest of the Old Testament we find the sinfulness of man. Israel constantly turned away from God, and when things got rough then they would cry out to God for help. This sounds like a lot of Christians today.

We find that the children of Israel ended up wandering in the wilderness for 40 years because of their lack of faith in God. A whole generation of people died. 603,550 men were saved, yet 603,548 were destroyed.

In Jude 5 we see that they were destroyed because they didn't remain faithful. Faithful here can also be defined as obedience, giving oneself in commitment, to trust in. Today, we see so many who will acknowledge the existence of God, yet when it comes to his personal touch in their lives God is not going to take care of them the way they want him to. They end up doing what they think needs to happen. Paul wrote about the behavior of Israel in **I Corinthians 10:6-10**:

*These events happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did or worship idols as some of them did. For the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged themselves in pagan revelry. And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. And don't grumble as some of them did, for that is why God sent his angel of death to destroy them.*

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**Israel's lack of faith or commitment is emphasized here by their disobedience, their commitment to sin, and their lack of respect for God.**

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The writer of Hebrews points out the same point in **Hebrews 3:12-4:2**

*Be careful then, dear friends. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, as long it is called "today," so that none of you will*

*be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. But never forget the warning: "Today you must listen to his voice. Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled." And who were those people who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Weren't they the ones Moses led out of Egypt? And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom was God speaking when he vowed that they would never enter his place of rest? He was speaking to those who disobeyed him. So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief. God's promise of entering his place of rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to get there. For this Good News – that God has prepared a place of rest – has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn't believe what God told them.*

The warning of Israel's disobedience, is a warning that the church must heed. Their willful disobedience, their commitment to sin, and their lack of respect of God still happens today in the church. God has called his people to "be holy, as he is holy."

Can a believer in God fall away and turn against God? Can one who says that they believe in God and yet live in willful sin, claim that they have salvation? We only need to look at the example of Israel to know the answer.

To live a comfortable Christian walk relying strictly on God to do his part only causes us to loose our edge. The urgency of our part must be something that we keep in check constantly.

## **2. The Example of the Angels. (vs. 6)**

What is a reason why someone would step outside of their boundaries and do their own thing? Obviously we can identify it as sin but it is the sin of pride and arrogance. **II Peter 2:4** says:

*For God did not spare even the angels when they sinned; he threw them into hell, in gloomy caves and darkness until the judgement day.*

We know that Satan's sin of pride causes him to strive to become higher in authority than God. Mankind falls into this trap as well. But not only is it in the world, but in the church. A spiritual arrogance or pride makes one think that they have achieved a level of spirituality, or that because they have contributed so much to the church in time, resources, or whatever it may be, that they are more valuable to God. Jesus gives us an example of the danger of pride and arrogance in **Luke 16:19-26**:

*Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed and who lived each day in luxury. At his door lay a diseased beggar named Lazarus. As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. Finally, the beggar died and was buried, and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham.*

The fact that Lazarus was longing for scraps and was sick shows us that the rich man did nothing for him. There was a sense of arrogance and pride.

*The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over there to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in these flames.' But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. Anyone who wanted to cross over to you from here is stopped at its edge, and no one there can cross over to us.*

Our arrogance and pride can rip us off from God's mercy and salvation. The more pride we develop in ourselves, the less dependence we have on God. The more arrogant we become about our achievements the less credit we give to God. God doesn't NEED us to accomplish his will. He can do it himself. And in the end, who is it that changes the lives of people? What force causes people to repent and turn to God? It is God and the power of the Holy Spirit who does the work. God's just wants us to experience the blessing of being an instrument in his hands. He is the one who has the skill to play the instrument and to play songs.

The Angels sin of pride and arrogance is a lesson to us. We can become so wrapped up in ourselves that we no longer leave room for God.

### **3. The Example of Sodom and Gomorrah (vs. 7)**

In **Genesis 18:20** we find God telling Abraham about Sodom and Gomorrah and the reason for their punishment:

*So the Lord told Abraham, "I have heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are extremely evil, and that everything they do is wicked."*

In fact Jude 7 says that they had were filled with sexual sin and perversion. The KJV states that they were "given over" to their sin. This term when translated in the Greek has the idea of complete unlawful lust. It was something that consumed them and made up their character. They became obedient to the sin and thus ignored God and purity. This sin was a conscious decision on the part of the people.

Today we have people who make a conscious decision to give themselves completely to the lust of the flesh or even to material things, popularity, power, and various other things. They go completely against what God wants for them and live impure unholy lives all for the sake of experiencing temporary earthly fulfillment.

**THE WARNINGS OF JUDE 5-7 ARE RELEVANT FOR TODAY. WE MUST HEED ITS WARNING. IT IS A WARNING TO US, THE CHURCH.**

The three examples that we are looking at this morning call us to tighten up the belt. To be obedient God, to separate ourselves from sin, thus showing our respect for God. To not allow pride and arrogance to cause our view of ourselves to become distorted in light of who God is. And finally, that we would not let sin consume us and rule our lives.

#### **4. The Solution to Sin**

Paul tells us in **Romans 6:12-13**

*Do not let sin control the way you live; Do not give in to its lustful desires. Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given a new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.*

*And so, dear Christian friends, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. **Romans 12:1-2***

*Whatever we do, it is because Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for everyone, we also believe that we have all died to the old life we used to live. He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer please themselves. Instead, they will live to please Christ, who died and was raised for them. **II Corinthians 5:14-15***

The only way we can stay away from the challenges of sin and our human nature is to give our lives to God. In all that we do, all that we speak, all that we expose ourselves may we seek God in his approval and strength. The dangers of sin are so serious and threatening. Our rejection of God is but a choice away. May we be on guard for our soul. May we constantly search our hearts, motives, and attitudes making sure that God does have ownership and rulership in our lives. **I John 5:21** says:

*Dear Children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.*

Jesus gives us a parable in **Matthew 21:28-32**:

*And Jesus said, "But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went away. Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go. Which of the two was obeying his father?" They replied, "The first, of course." Then Jesus explained his meaning to the religious leaders: "I assure you, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. For John the Baptist came and showed you the way to life, and you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to turn from your sins and believe him."*

### **Conclusion**

Beware of sin. It can come and steal eternal life from us. It can distract us from the truth. Let us constantly evaluate ourselves and our standing with God. May we respond when something comes between us. May our love for God, and our love for the truth far outweigh our need to satisfy our own selfish nature. Because then and only then will we find a fulfillment that will last for all eternity.