

Culture Creepers: "Hey Jude!"

Jude 1-4

Jesus: True and Better Video

The Bible – 66 books; 611,000 words; 3x the length of Moby Dick...and all of it points to the person & work of Jesus Christ, who paid the debt of sin & proved His Lordship by rising from the dead.

The Longest book – Jeremiah: 33,000+ words

The Shortest book – 3 John – 219 words (shorter than the Gettysburg address.)

Today begins a series in 5th shortest book, containing just 461 words: **Jude**.

***As we begin the series, I want to give a specific challenge: Memorize Jude over the next 2 months.**

*I would love to see 461 people take the "**Jude Memory Challenge**": **about 3 verses a week.**

*Scripture says: "*Thy word have I hidden in my heart, that I may not sin against you.*"

***This week:** Memorize just 4 verses. v.1-4.

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, To those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Why Jude...why now?

*Before Sabbatical, I starting planning a sermon series in the book of Psalms.

*When I returned in June, I planned an amazing **10 week series** on facing relational adversity.

*The sermon series that...almost happened! **When I face relational adversity, I will...**

Psalm 5	Renew my focus
Psalm 17 -	Watch my mouth
Psalm 26 -	Maintain my integrity
Psalm 28 -	Trust my Shepherd
Psalm 35 -	Bless my enemies
Psalm 59 -	Remember my future
Psalm 64 -	Surrender my timing
Psalm 71 -	Praise my God
Psalm 109 -	Increase my prayers
Psalm 120 -	Pursue the peace
Psalm 140 -	Preserve my innocence

*It would have been a fantastic series, full of practical advice, biblical wisdom, and would have transformed relationships in great ways.

BUT...on late June during morning abiding, this knucklehead realized: *I haven't asked what God wants.*

*So, sitting down on **June 28th**, I asked: ***“Lord, what do you want for our people?”***

***My Journal Entry that day – to show you how instrumental that day was... (Picture)**

*Ask me: “What happened next?” The light of heaven filled the room; Jesus appeared in His resurrection glory; and His audible voice shook the rafters: ***“Preach Jude!”***

*Actually, it was more subtle...like the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit prompting me: “Jude.”

My first reaction: “Huh? Why Jude?” So I turned to read, testing whether it was the Lord or just me...

*It wasn't long before I was struck with a bit of laughter because of v.3:

“Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith...”

IOW, Jud says: “Although I originally planned on a **positive, encouraging letter about our salvation, something else of **critical importance** compelled me to change.”

*Translation: “Although I was very eager to preach in Psalms, **necessity (a burden)** was laid on me by the Holy Spirit to address issues that are more critical for our culture.

***It didn't take long before God redirected me and laid the necessity of this book on my heart.**

***New Hope: I believe that God wants Jude right now for our people and our culture.**

After reading several times, looking for a key theme, it occurred to me that Jude is writing to believers in the church about dangerous things that had “crept in” their midst and were influencing their lives.

v.4 is key: ***“For certain people have CREPT IN UNNOTICED...”***

*Dangerous people had CREPT IN...more than that, worldly ways of thinking and living (promoted/applauded by culture) had **secretly infiltrated** and had a huge influence on believers.

*The believers were unaware of things that had Crept In, and needed to hear the prophetic voice of Jude that showed just how dangerous these things were.

***For example, one of our pastors was visiting a remote village in South Africa, where the huts in the bush were up on stilts and surrounded by sand.**

*He noticed that the people raked perfect circles into the sand around the huts, as if grooming the sand in crop circles.

*He asked a local missionary ***“Why do the people rake the sand in circles?”***

*Answer: This region is home to **11 of the 15 deadliest snakes** in the world.

*Before the people leave home to go work, they rake the sand, grooming it perfectly.

*When they come home, they look to see if a snake left a trail creeping in the sand.

*If they see a snake trail going on (not coming out) they know a **snake is in the house.**

***New Hope: Jude writes to help believers identify “snakes in the house.”**

*Things that have crept in unnoticed.

*Dangerous cultural influences and practices that gain tremendous influence over us.

***By way of example, on Monday as I was studying this, I asked the Lord: “What is one area that a snake has crept in unnoticed into our home, gaining influence?”**

*Immediately, I sensed the Holy Spirit say: **“Netflix.” That day, I cancelled it.**

*I don’t know what has CREPT IN unnoticed into your home, but this is what I’m convinced of:

*Every one of us has a snake in the house.

*Something that has crept in, unnoticed, and gained too much influence over our lives.

*I appeal to you: ask the Lord what snake has crept in and take immediate action to eliminate it.

Jude Overview: (Picture of Bible)

- **Culture Creepers:** v.1-19

*Jude, heavy on Old Testament imagery, shows trails of snakes that had crept into the church.

*I believe he identifies **7 culture creepers** that had gained influence over believers.

- **Biblical Correctives:** v.20-23

*4 verses towards the end, summarize the biblical correctives to culture creepers.

*After **shedding a light on the snakes in the house**, Jude shows how to eliminate them.

*Interestingly, he gives **7 Correctives**...each one being an antidote to a Culture Creeper.

- **Ultimate Victory:** v.24-25

*In the most beautiful doxology in the Bible, Jude bursts out in two glorious verses of victory.

*He reminds us that no matter what snakes **creep into the church and influence believers**, we serve a great and glorious Savior, Jesus Christ, who wins the victory.

*Christ alone has the power to keep us from stumbling & present us blameless before God.

*Christ alone has glory, majesty, dominion, and authority over all creation.

*Christ alone deserves the praise before all time, now and forevermore.

Action Steps:

I appeal to you: identify one snake that has CREPT IN UNNOTICED and presents a danger to you.

- **Time Creepers** – things that rob our time, dull our senses, busy our schedules and distract us from abiding in the presence of Christ.

- **Habit Creepers** – things that are not necessarily evil, but we are excessively given to them. The Scripture says: *“Not all things are beneficial.”*

- **Relational Creepers** – unhealthy friendships, poor decision making; bitterness & unforgiveness. For our college/high school folks, I heard good advice given this week: “The friends you make in the first 4 weeks will determine the direction of your next 4 years.” Choose wisely.
- **Sin Creepers** – temptations that have crept in and now entangle you in a web hard to escape. This is one of **satan’s great tactics...to creep in unnoticed** for the purpose of destruction.
- **Priority Creepers** – an unhealthy priority of the **earthly over eternal; VacationLand over Heaven Land**. Giving excessive time and attention to wealth, leisure or recreation that makes one lazy and complacent spiritually.

*No doubt a majority of the **dechurched in our region** have allowed their priorities to be shaped by the culture instead of Christ.

Picture: “VacationLand” road sign.

*One of the hardest parts of living in Northern Michigan is the **snakes that creep into our lives unnoticed and we often don’t realize how much we’ve been affected.**

*That’s why we need Jude: A prophetic voice saying – “Watch for things that creep in!”

*I appeal to you, brothers: ***What snake has crept in to your life? Will you take time to ask the Lord to identify the trail? What will you do about it?***

Don’t forget who we are as followers of Jesus!

We are: *“Called. Beloved in God the Father. Kept for Jesus Christ.”*

*This represents the entire work of Jesus Christ to **destroy the ancient snake** & redeem us.

*We are called...out of darkness and into his glorious light.

*We are loved...God demonstrating His great love by giving His Son on the cross.

*We are kept...with a promise that God will finish the work He began.

*Because we are called, beloved, and kept...**God called Jude to give Correctives to Cultural Creepers.**

*This is the book we need. This is the book we should memorize. And this is our victory:

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.